A Legacy of Words:

A Discussion of the Frontier Legacy and Expansionist Rhetoric in the Nineteenth Century

by

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Abstract

This paper argues that the use of masculine rhetoric in the expansion of the United States derived from a larger ideological system that glorified masculinity through imperialism. The United States relied on the frontier myth, a belief that asserted that the nation was formed through the struggle of settling the frontier. The American man possessed the strength to conquer the wilderness and the people who already inhabited it. This version of masculinity combined not only elements of nationalism but also of race. As the United States continued to expand its borders through imperialism, the masculine identity associated with the frontier myth persisted in the psyche of the American male. The conquering man became the ideal of the American man, and rhetoric regarding the national need for this figure in the continual expansion of America justified wars of imperialism. In order to observe recurring patterns of masculine rhetoric, this thesis adopts a comparative approach to American imperialism by analyzing two wars separated by time and political climate; the U.S.-Mexican War and the Spanish-American War. Systems of ideology are always embodied by people; consequently this thesis applies a biographical approach to the key political figures who influenced the United States' route to war. These men serve as examples of the internalization and intersectionality of masculine rhetoric as well as the outward expression of those systems in the form of imperialism.

For my fiancé Haley who has given me the strength to pursue my dreams. Without you, none of this would have been possible.

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A special thanks to the members of the committee who pushed me to be a better researcher. Though there were difficult trials during this project, because of you I have become a better historian.

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Introduction

One of the most important symbols in the history of the United States has been the frontier. The nation's interaction with the frontier fostered its significance for the American people. The frontier became a mythical place where the nation could expand, thrive, and create hardened characters who demonstrated American fortitude. Frederick Jackson Turner popularized the nation's conviction regarding this in his 1893 essay, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History." Turner argued that the successive conquest of the frontier fortified the nation and this struggle defined the American character.[1] Turner's thesis addressed a myth present in both the American psyche and American politics. For well over a century prior to the publication of his work, expansionists had justified the settlement of new areas by invoking the frontier myth. The mustering of a heroic legacy was a much more palatable alternative in trying to gain public support for imperial conquest most evident in the wars of imperialism of the nineteenth century. The political rhetoric of the U.S.-Mexican War and Spanish-American War exploited the legacy of the frontier as a pretext to go to war while hiding the imperial intentions of expansion. The perpetuation of the frontier in these wars of expansion gave the American people a heroic image of expansion and one that seemed to be part of the common history of the nation. Politicians used the frontiersman to represent the common hero by portraying expansion as a part of American history.

Political leaders characterized American men who fought for expansion as those who would maintain the legacy of the frontiersmen. Expansionists attributed the cultural

[1] Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," in *The Frontier in American History*, (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1894), 2-3.

motifs important to the nation to the frontiersman to further embed them into the nation's mythologized history. These motifs included masculinity, race, Christianity, conquest, and violence; together these motifs existed as an interconnected cultural system. It is important to note that these motifs did not simply exist within the confines of the rhetoric of expansion. In fact, they were cultural themes that were part of American society. Many of the leaders of expansion grew up surrounded by these cultural motifs and, hence, these themes became part of their knowledge base. This interrelated system of values influenced expansionist leaders and their views on expansion. Nonetheless, expansionist leaders also deliberately used those values to draw connections between the nation's mythical past and its expansionist future. This thesis examines this political rhetoric by examining both personal experiences and cultural themes at large.

Historians have written extensively about the frontier myth. Many focused on the frontier and its motifs within literature, while others focused on the legacy of the frontier within American culture. Historical commentaries on the frontier have not yet, however, explored this myth as it applied to individuals in order to better understand why expansionist leaders employed the frontier myth in their rhetoric. Biographers of the key political figures, on the other hand, have discussed the impact of personal experiences on their rhetoric but not the larger overall frontier myth. Due to the limitations of their studies, biographers have not been able to place the importance of cultural motifs in a larger context within American history. This study seeks to address the gap that exists between the importance of the frontier myth in American culture and identifying the value the myth possessed for key political leaders.

Historiography

Due to the scope of this analysis, the historiography surrounding the thesis's main point comes from a number of academic perspectives. The history of American symbolism and the frontier, in particular, are important to the focal point of the thesis. Analysis of the importance of the frontier after the nineteenth century began with Henry Nash Smith's *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth*. This analysis discussed the literature of the American West and demonstrated how the myth manifested itself in this medium. Smith argued that the mythologized version of the American West continued to evolve along with the nation, which persisted in making cultural motifs of the frontier myth prevalent in American culture.[2] The themes included agrarianism, republicanism, race, and self-sufficiency all of which made up the American character.[3] However, the motifs of a new republic existed symbiotically with the rise of an American empire seeking riches in newly settled areas.[4] Smith's work laid the foundation for other historians to examine the frontier myth as it was presented in novels.

The frontier and American myth were then further explored by Richard Slotkin who approached the discussion by way of literary analysis. Slotkin, however, went beyond Smith's analysis of cultural values within literature and connected them to the environment in which they existed. Two of his works are featured within this historiography due to the significant contributions that Slotkin made to the field. In

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[2] Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), 11-12.

[3] Ibid., 6.

[4] Ibid., 12, 29.

Regeneration through Violence, Slotkin discussed how traditions of American identity evolved into myth by using literature to trace cultural themes.[5] He argued that the generation of a myth begins with a national consciousness and the cultural values of that society also find their way into the myth.[6] Slotkin paid particular attention to the correlation of violence with race, religion, gender, and nationalism present in the mythology of the American frontier.[7] These values are embodied by the heroes of these stories, the frontiersmen.

Slotkin's discussion of the frontier myth was then revisited in his later work *The Fatal Environment: The Myth of the Frontier in the Age of Industrialization, 1800-1890*. While the myth of the frontier remained the primary subject of Slotkin's analysis, this work dissected the political manipulation of the myth. He argued that writers and politicians alike perpetuated the mythical ideology of expansion.[8] Expansion became a righteous cause in which the civilized white Protestant male defeated the outsider, which was defined as all those who did not fit this model.[9] To accomplish the righteous goal of expansion, he affirmed that the use of violence was the method that ensured the growth of the nation. The myth, Slotkin claimed, obstructed the view of the public and created a cyclical pattern that allowed leaders to influence the political process.[10] This work is one

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[5] Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1973), 3-5.

[6] Ibid., 6.

[7] Ibid., 22.

[8] Richard Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment: The Myth of the Frontier in the Age of Industrialization*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985), 10-11.

[9] Ibid., 16-17.

[10] Ibid., 12.

of the foundational sources for this thesis as cultural and political discussions are integrated by means of Slotkin's study. The analysis in the thesis, however, consists of more than the study of the frontier myth itself.

This discussion of cultural values embedded within both tales of the frontiersman and expansionist rhetoric demonstrates how the two existed within a larger cultural system. In order to address the culture surrounding political rhetoric, the historiography of the project includes works that address cultural values in the eras discussed. For a deeper examination of masculinity and its role in the mythology of the frontier, I looked at Amy Greenberg's *Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum Empire*, which discusses the role of masculinity in expansion. Her analysis included the roles of power, strength, and violence in nineteenth century masculinity.[11] Greenberg examined Southern Antebellum cultural attitudes concerning empire and manhood. The author argued that expansionist masculinity was an aggressive form of manhood focused on conquest and personal glory.[12] Greenberg contended that the image of heroism during the mid-1800s reflected a power structure based on class, race, and gender. These factors worked together to create an interlinked system that inserted frontier ideals into wars of expansion.[13] However, Greenberg's work only considered the first war of expansion considered in this thesis. Fortunately, another work analyzed masculinity in a similar fashion to Greenberg's study but in a later period.

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[11] Amy Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum American Empire*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 11-13.

[12] Ibid., 4

[13] Ibid., 8.

Kristin Hoganson's *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars* provided the necessary framework for the dialogue of cultural systems in the late nineteenth century. Like Greenberg, Hoganson explored the role of masculinity in politics and power dynamics though her work centers on a later period. She contends that the aggressive masculinity of the nineteenth century was as much an instigator of war as were social, political, or economic motives.[14] Hoganson argued that the aggressive manhood observed in expansionism became a justification for war and a mask for other intentions.[15] The most important section of Hoganson's analysis was her investigation into political rhetoric as intentional phrasing designed to produce a certain outcome. The cultural values within the rhetoric were tools used by politicians in order render imperialist conquest as mythical as continental expansion was in the American psyche.[16] Accordingly, Hoganson's work engaged with the exploitation of the frontier in nineteenth century politics. The culture described by Hoganson in her work is further elaborated upon in Gail Bederman's monograph on nineteenth century masculine culture.

While Hoganson and Bederman discuss the same period and cultural themes, Bederman's *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* focuses more upon the cultural intersections present in the late 1800s rather than their political implications. She argues that masculinity and racial

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[14] Kristin Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 8.

[15] Ibid., 9-10.

[16] Ibid., 14.

dominance were concepts that mutually reinforced each other. Additionally, these concepts created a culture of hyper masculinity that held physical violence as a testament to their masculinity.[17] Bederman analyzed the cult of masculinity not as a fable but as principles that men in the industrial world lived by in reaction to the insecurity of manhood.[18] Her work argued that the attempt to revitalize the concept of manhood derives from a long history of aggressive masculinity that has continued to evolve throughout American history.[19] This closer examination of the intertwined principles of American culture reveals the various themes at work behind the political rhetoric surrounding the Spanish-American War.

My thesis extracts the theoretical framework of this historiography and uses it to analyze the development of key political leaders in the U.S.'s wars of expansion in the nineteenth century. To analyze the Mexican-American War and the political rhetoric associated with frontier expansion, the thesis discusses the life of then president James K. Polk. Additionally, the paper examines the life of Jefferson Davis in order to view the perspective of the U.S.-Mexican War before, during, and after the conflict. Moreover, one of the key expansionists of the Spanish-American War of the late nineteenth century was Henry Cabot Lodge. As a leading expansionist in Congress for years, Lodge's rhetoric displayed the pervasiveness of the frontier legacy in and out of politics. This discussion also traces cultural concepts back to the rhetoric used by these historical

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[17] Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States 1880-1917*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 4-5.

[18] Ibid., 6.

[19] Ibid., 6-7.

figures in order to further the imperial expansion of the United States. Instead of treating this theoretical framework as a general perspective, the thesis personalizes cultural concepts in order to understand the use of the frontier myth as a reflection of the American cultural system. The cultural aspect of the myth created a philosophy that was defined by conquest and domination. Politically, the frontier proved to be a tool that politicians used to argue for pursuing expansion. My analysis looks at how the two were correlated and the ways in which they mutually reinforced each other.

Research Questions

How did cultural motifs impact upon proponents of imperialism and how did this development lead to the use of the frontier myth in political rhetoric? How did cultural motifs of the nineteenth century correlate and interact with each other? What imperial ambitions did nineteenth century rhetoric conceal? In what ways did the frontier myth evolve in order to remain relevant to the cultural and political climates of these wars of imperialism? What were the individual experiences with American cultural motifs of James K. Polk, Jefferson Davis, and Henry Cabot Lodge? How did these experiences shape their construction of imperialist rhetoric? Finally, what did the legacy of this cultural system mean for the construction of an American identity?

Purpose

This thesis attempts to answer the above questions while bridging the gap between the discussion of the frontier myth in political rhetoric and the cultural system that helped create it. By discussing each political leader's experiences, the thesis

individualizes the experience of American culture throughout the nineteenth century. The effects of these cultural systems are then traced through the rhetoric of each figure in order to understand how these motifs resurfaced as a rhetoric of expansion. By discussing the themes in several periods, this thesis argues that the legacy of the cultural motifs is a significant and enduring aspect of American culture.

Outline

Chapter One discusses the life of James K. Polk, the president who led the nation through the U.S.-Mexican War as well as the conflict over the Oregon Territory. The chapter discusses Polk's early life on the frontier, his separation from it, his political career, and the use of the frontier myth in his wartime rhetoric to advance his imperial ambitions. Chapter Two details the life of Jefferson Davis, who later became president of the Confederate States of America during the Civil War. His life was more connected than that of Polk to the frontier. Davis not only began his life on the frontier, but had a long military career that shaped his views on the cultural systems within the United States. The discussion of Davis addresses the influence of Southern antebellum ideology on Davis's construction of the frontier myth and its application to the U.S.-Mexican War. The impact of Davis's life, work, and rhetoric set the stage for the transformation of the nation into an industrial power. This transformation led to the Spanish-American War in which the nation further developed as an economic empire. Chapter Three reviews the life of Henry Cabot Lodge who was one of the most prominent imperialist congressmen during the Spanish-American War. Though he lived in a different cultural and political climate than the first two subjects, the cultural systems that shaped Polk and Davis also

shaped Lodge. Lodge represented a new generation of men who experienced the frontier through its legacy. His construction of the frontier and its application in political rhetoric was academic and intellectual. Together, these chapters detail the legacy of cultural systems and the use of the frontier myth in the expansion of the United States.

Chapter 1: James K. Polk

From beginning to end, the frontier remained a foundational part of James K. Polk's life. Although Polk lived on the frontier as a child, he did not spend much of his adult life there. Instead, Polk's perceptions of the frontier came from a family legacy and the American fascination with the frontier during the era of Jacksonian expansion (1829-1837).[20] Polk himself was a scholar who engaged with the cultural systems that glorified the frontier in an indirect way, that is, Polk observed frontier principles in others namely his family and his mentor, Andrew Jackson. The concepts of masculinity, race, Christianity, violence, and conquest operated concurrently throughout Polk's life and became part of his rhetoric. These cultural concepts helped Polk to create an image of the frontiersman that, in turn, promoted these very qualities.

Polk used these ideas of the valiant American frontiersman to promote American expansion throughout the mid-nineteenth century. As a congressman, Polk used the frontiersman to promote continental expansion during the Jackson administration. He continued to use this rhetoric throughout his political career and to elevate himself to the presidency. The apogee of Polk's frontiersman rhetoric came during his 1844 presidential campaign and the subsequent U.S.-Mexican War. Polk used the image of the frontiersman to both promote the war with Mexico and quarrel with Britain in an attempt to divert attention from his imperial ambitions. Polk's frontiersman rhetoric began the era

[20] Thomas R. Hietala, *Manifest Design: American Exceptionalism and Empire*, revised edition, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 3-4.

of imperialistic expansion of the United States and set an example for future leaders with similar ambitions.[21]

The legacy of the frontier actually began for Polk before he was born and was to progress into a key element of his ideology as an imperialist. The heroism of his family history inspired Polk to regard life on the frontier as a celebrated lifestyle. Richard Slotkin argued that the basis of the frontier myth was the glorification of the Anglo-Saxon settlers attempting to survive in the wilderness against the elements and the Native Americans.[22] For Polk, the primary example of this was Ezekiel Polk, his grandfather. Ezekiel was a frontiersman for the majority of his life. He exemplified the type of frontiersman that Polk in his political career would later idolize: an Indian fighter, settler, and upholder of American values.

Polk's grandfather grew up in Mecklenburg, North Carolina during the 1760s.[23] In 1769, Ezekiel moved westward into the newly formed Tryon County, North Carolina,

[21] Imperialist expansion in the nineteenth century went beyond continental expansion, which began in the colonial era and continued until the beginning of the U.S.-Mexican War. An empire, on the other hand, is a rapidly growing entity that incorporates land, people, power, and wealth. While the era of continental expansion sought to move Native Americans off their land and further west, the imperial period sought to subdue and place Native Americans on reservations. After the U.S-Mexican War, the United States incorporated Mexicans into the population as well, although they were considered second class citizens. The main reason for the incorporation of these groups, however subordinately, was due to the pace at which expansion occurred. This pace did not allow these populations to be removed therefore they had to be incorporated, thereby creating an empire. Hieteala, *Manifest Design: American Exceptionalism and Empire,* 2-3, 173-177.

[22] Richard Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment: The Myth of the Frontier in the Age of Industrialization, 1800-1890*, (New York: Atheneum, 1985), 30-31.

[23] Louise A. Mayo, *President James K. Polk: The Dark Horse President*, (New York: Nova History Publications, Inc., 2006), 7-8.

where he became a surveyor as well as Clerk of the Court.[24] In addition to being a settler, Ezekiel Polk was also an Indian fighter.

Polk's grandfather symbolized the most heroic form of the frontiersman, which the later president would present as his example of the ultimate frontier champion. Ezekiel Polk embodied the struggle of Anglo-Saxon culture against the savage nature of the Native Americans during his time as an Indian fighter. In 1775, Ezekiel Polk was commissioned as a captain of a company of mounted rangers in his North Carolina district.[25] In December of the same year, Ezekiel Polk regained his commission and helped win the Battle of Reedy River during which he proved himself to be a capable leader. In the summer of 1776, Ezekiel Polk fought the Cherokee near Barker's Creek. [26] When the Revolutionary War began Ezekiel Polk's father and brothers all served in the Army, but Ezekiel did not join the fighting. He did, however, redeem himself as a patriot by returning to the North Carolina militia in order to fill the position of colonel from which his brother Thomas had resigned for a promotion.[27] This act allowed him to demonstrate his patriotism by fighting Native Americans when settlers were threatened. The Indian fighters were the warriors who defeated the enemy. In Slotkin's aforementioned theory, the frontiersman was the hero who allowed American settlement

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[24] D. A. Thompkins, *History of Mecklenburg County and the City of Charlotte From 1740-1903*, vol. 2, (Charlotte: Observer Printing House, 1903), 80.

[25] Major J. Mayson to Colonel William Thompson Esquire, 30 July 1775, in "Papers of the First Council of the Revolutionary Party in South Carolina June-November, 1775 continued," *The South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 1, no. 1, (Jan. 1900), 69-70.

[26] Sellers, "Colonel Ezekiel Polk: Pioneer and Patriarch," 86.

[27] J. M. G. Ramsey, "The Vindication of the Revolutionary Character and Services of the Late Colonel Ezekiel Polk of Mecklenburg, North Carolina" in *The American Historical Magazine*, ed. W. R. Garrett, (Nashville: University Press of Peabody Normal College, 1896), 157-159.

to occur and force back the savagery of the wilderness.[28] Thus Polk's family legacy demonstrated that the opportunities of the frontier and fighting the enemy were the ultimate means of proving one's patriotism. This sense of violence and patriotism would remain with Polk throughout his development into an adult as well as in his political life.

Ezekiel Polk continued his role in the militia but his primary focus was on farming in the new territory. The frontier bestowed a lasting legacy on the Polk family that would shape the early life of the future president. Polk's father, Samuel, followed in the steps of Ezekiel Polk by also becoming a farmer on the frontier. Much like his father, Samuel Polk was an opportunist who saw the frontier as a way to improve himself and, consequently, the frontier would be the environment into which Polk was born.

James K. Polk was born in North Carolina on November 2, 1795.[29] In 1806, the Polk family relocated to modern day Maury County, Tennessee, following Ezekiel Polk to the newest western frontier of the time.[30] This is where Polk would spend his childhood formulating ideas about frontier culture and the role of expansion.

From the beginning of his life, however, racial conflict epitomized Polk's life on the frontier. The area in Tennessee to which the family had moved had been a battleground between Americans and Cherokees since the 1760s.[31] The Cherokee Nation and several other tribes had signed the Treaty of Hopewell in 1785, which recognized the

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[28] Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment*, 30-31.

[29] Eugene Irving McCormac, *James K. Polk: A Political Biography*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1922), 2.

[30] Mayo, *President James K. Polk: The Dark Horse President,* 8.

[31] Sam W. Haynes, *James K. Polk and the Expansionist Impulse*, (New York: Longman Inc., 1997), 8.

right of the Cherokee to block any potential invaders of their land. However, American settlers continued to advance the boundaries of the frontier and encroach on Cherokee land.[32] By the early 1780s, skirmishes devolved into armed conflicts between local militia and the Cherokee. The Cherokee were eventually pushed off their land south of the Ohio River, thereby, opening up the territory for further Anglo-American settlement.[33] Ezekiel Polk was part of the initial surveying process in eastern Tennessee between 1793 and 1794. He surveyed land on the border of North Carolina and Tennessee as a deputy surveyor for the Southwest Territorial government.[34] Although the area was settled by the time the Polks moved to Tennessee, the danger of attacks from Native American tribes was always present – a fact Polk would be constantly reminded of throughout his childhood.

Conceptions about race came not only from stories from Polk's grandfather about settling Tennessee: Polk lived through racial conflict and conquest during his lifetime as well. In April of 1812, reports of a family murdered by Creek Indians along the lower Duck River caused racial tensions to resurface and incited fear among the men of Maury County.[35] When Andrew Jackson called for volunteers to fight the British and their

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[32] Carol L. Higham, *The Civil War and the West: The Frontier Transformed*, (Santa Barbara: Praegar, 2013), 47-48.

[33] Charles Sellers, *James K. Polk, Jacksonian, 1795-1843*, vol. 1, (Norwalk: Easton Press, 1987), 20.

[34] Ibid., 20-21. The Southwest Territory in this context refers to a territory created from the Washington District ceded to the U.S. federal government in 1790. This territory included the land south of the Ohio River in modern day Kentucky and Tennessee. This territory then became the state of Tennessee in 1796.

[35] Governor William Blount to Secretary of War William Eustis, 26 July 1812, in U.S. Congress, *American State Papers: Documents, Legislative and Executive of the Congress of the United States From the First Session of the First to the Third Session of the Thirteenth Congress, Class II: Indian Affairs*, vol. IV, (Gales and Seaton: Washington D.C., 1832), 813-814. Sellers, *James K. Polk, Jacksonian,* 38-39.

Native allies, the men of Maury County responded with enthusiasm and nearly 2,500 men joined the local militia.[36] James K. Polk felt the need to participate in this war and become a heroic soldier defending his home on the frontier from the Creek. However, because of his weak physical state Polk was unable to join the War of 1812.[37] The inability to join the war prevented Polk from continuing the legacy of Indian fighting and soldiering that his grandfather had begun. In addition, Polk's lack of physical strength would trouble him for the rest of his life and define the way in which he saw masculinity as part of the American character.

The frontier myth idealized a life of hard work and male physicality, but this was not the life of Polk in Middle Tennessee. Unlike his brothers, Polk took no part in outdoor activities or hunting trips with his family and did not participate in physical sports such as wrestling.[38] These activities exemplify what Stephanie McCurry has termed martial manhood; that is, the experience of celebrating aggression and physicality.[39] Amy Greenberg further developed this concept by stating that physicality was an attribute of the outdoorsman that was linked to expansion.[40] Polk's frontier life

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[36] Ibid., 39.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid, 39.

[39] Stephanie McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds: Yeoman Households, Gender Relations & the Political Culture of the Antebellum South Carolina Low Country*, (Oxford: University Press, 1995), 261. McCurry characterized martial manhood as an idea advocated by nullifiers during the Nullification Crisis of 1829, of which James K. Polk was a part as a congressman. The purpose of using the term martial manhood here is to trace the cultural systems that led to the creation of this idea through Polk's early development. In this way the discussion of the frontier life, masculinity, and Polk's health become a recurring theme throughout this chapter. Additionally, the components of martial masculinity and restrained masculinity are deconstructed and traced within a larger cultural system.

[40] Amy Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum American Empire*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 12-13.

was supposed to embody these values; the denial of that life, therefore, caused Polk to actively pursue a connection to those values. Both McCurry and Greenberg have attributed the glorification of these values of masculinity to political movements.[41] Polk's reaction to the cultural idea of manhood both supports and complicates these analyses. Polk did use masculinity as a tool for his imperialist political movement in 1844, but his infatuation with these ideas had begun in his youth. There was a strong desire within Polk to correspond with the ideal description of the frontiersman.

Polk's physical weakness stemmed from a medical problem that prevented the young man from living up to these expectations of masculinity. Polk suffered from various illnesses; the most prominent of which was bladder stones, which rendered the young man weak and in constant pain.[42] Polk's early life suggests, however, that if his experience on the frontier was minimal, it was nonetheless profound. At the same time, in order for Polk to internalize the myth of masculinity he did not need to live the life of the frontiersman. The frontier myth was not just for the men who lived on the frontier or fought in wars of conquest. Other men, including the well-educated, also perpetuated the frontier myth and Polk ultimately established a model which allowed them to use the frontier as a trope of imperialistic rhetoric. For Polk, education would prove to be the

[41] Ibid. McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds,* 259.

[42] Sellers, *James K. Polk, Jacksonian,* 39-40. While Dr. McDowell diagnosed Polk with gallstones in 1812, Polk continued to have health problems throughout his life including abdominal pain and a weakened immune system. These physical ailments would serve as constant reminders of Polk's weakness. The constant reinforcement that Polk would never be the heroic frontiersman suggests a possible reason for Polk's desire to engage with frontier life.

base upon which he would build his knowledge and create a new possible route for himself.[43]

Academic study proved to be a way that Polk could engage with the frontier in a different manner. By late 1812, Polk's abdominal pain was so debilitating that his father decided to make a trip of over 200 miles on horseback to find relief for his son. They travelled to the house of Dr. Ephraim McDowell where Polk had the bladder stones removed.[44] This was one of the first successful surgeries of its kind and while it did lessen the abdominal pain, the surgery did not improve Polk's health overall.[45] Due to the severe pain from which Polk had suffered in his childhood, his parents homeschooled him in his early years. His mother, Jane Knox Polk, served as his primary teacher focusing on basic skills like reading and writing.[46] Polk's parents were not themselves well-educated but they were insistent on including political and religious principles in young Polk's early education.

Beliefs in the Polk household that reflected the principles of the frontier shaped the future president's worldview. From each of his parents, Polk learned ideological systems present in American culture including religion and democracy. Religion divided the Polk household; while Polk's mother was a devoted Presbyterian, his father was a deist.[47] Jane Knox Polk ensured that though her husband was not committed to the

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[43] Haynes, *James K. Polk and the Expansionist Impulse,* 10.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid., 40-41.

[46] McCormac, *James K. Polk: A Political Biography*, 2-3.

[47] Mayo, *President James K. Polk: The Dark Horse President,* 8.

Christian faith, her son still became a dedicated Presbyterian. She provided Polk with a religious education and a deep religious conviction.[48] Polk's mother, in her devotion, imparted a sense of restrained manhood, which Greenberg states focused on morality, accountability, and religious devotion.[49] Polk, however, lived in a world in which he struggled to define who he was as a man. While Christianity and education were emphasized throughout Polk's life, physical weakness and the environment that the young man grew up in created Polk's desire to pursue martial masculinity. Polk's life, however, suggests that these two ideologies were, in fact, mutually reinforcing. While restrained manhood focused on Christian values and martial manhood revolved around proving one's physicality, expansion allowed both ideologies to co-exist for the apparent benefit of the nation.[50] Accordingly, Polk's father imparted martial manhood and the ideals of Jeffersonian Democracy to his son.

Samuel Polk passed on to his son a conviction regarding the American political system that intertwined with Polk's ideas of belligerent masculinity. Polk's father was a profound believer in Jeffersonian Democracy and particularly in the emphasis placed on the common man taking part in governmental politics.[51] Additionally, Jeffersonian Democracy promoted the ideal of an empire of liberty that aimed to spread the values of the American Constitution through conquest, thereby, making democracy available to all people, or more specifically, to all property-owning white males. Jeffersonian Democracy

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[48] Ibid.

[49] Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood*, 11-12.

[50] Ibid.

[51] McCormac, *James K. Polk: A Political Biography*, 2-3.

combined conquest with masculinity and patriotism.[52] Men proved their patriotism and masculinity through the act of conquest with the ultimate goal of a utopian agrarian society. According to Slotkin, Jeffersonian ideals sanctified violence as the method that would create an agrarian paradise.[53] Ultimately, this form of expansionism became a justification for violence. The combination of these two concepts remained a constant theme throughout Polk's life though always observed from the sidelines rather than on the battlefield itself. Consequently, Polk continued his academic career instead of becoming a frontiersman like his father and grandfather.

Though Polk never became a frontiersman, he continued to allow frontier culture to define his character as he grew into a young man. Following his surgery, in 1813, Polk finally left homeschooling for a small classroom at the local Presbyterian church in Maury County. There, his teacher reinforced the Christian doctrine as well as imparting more advanced material such as arithmetic and reading the Greek and Roman classics such as the *Iliad*.[54] After Polk had made sufficient progress in his education, Samuel Polk moved his son to a larger school in Murfreesboro, where Polk boarded with the Childress family and met his future wife, Sarah Childress.[55] His time at the Murfreesboro Academy adequately prepared Polk to enter university. Subsequently, Polk attended the University

[52] Sellers*, James K. Polk, Jacksonian*, vol. 1, 40.

[53] Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment*, 78.

[54] Ibid., 41.

[55] Barbara Bennett Peterson, *Sarah Childress Polk, First Lady of Tennessee and Washington*, (New York: Nova History Publications, 2002), 5.

of North Carolina where he studied law.[56] He also participated in several extracurricular activities including debating and publishing essays in the university newspaper.

In Polk's early works, the combination of frontier ideals he had learned at home found its way into his academic thinking. For instance, his essay, "The Power of Invention," displayed evidence of the interaction between his university education and the ideals he had learned as a young man. The essay combined Christine theology and John Locke's theory of self, along with a discussion of creativity that resulted in an acute analysis of American inventiveness. He argued that the American experience of settling the frontier had created a society so unique and inventive that it had no equal.[57] This essay was an early indication of Polk's belief in American exceptionalism and of the country's national values. This conviction was so strong at a relatively young age that it was evident that the heroism of the frontier had made a lasting impression on Polk. During his time at university, Polk impressed classmates and professors alike with his sophisticated analyses and eloquent speech.[58] Yet for all of the education that Polk received at Chapel Hill, he learned his most important lessons outside the classroom.

While still a university student in 1819, Polk was introduced to the art of politics through the offer of an apprenticeship by Felix Grundy who served in the Tennessee House of Representatives. Grundy would teach Polk how to utilize his talent for rhetoric to advance his political ambitions. The same year that Polk began his apprenticeship, he

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[56] McCormac, *James K. Polk: A Political Biography*, 12

[57] James K. Polk, "The Powers of Invention," essay, 1818, in *University of North Carolina Magazine 1793-1962*, vol. XIV, ed. Collier Cobb and J. M. Oldham, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1895), 5-11.

[58] Sellers, *James K. Polk, Jacksonian,* vol. 1, 51.

became the clerk for the Tennessee State Senate.[59] Grundy was considered to be a war hawk as evidenced by his earlier career in which he had been one of the Congressmen in favor of war with Britain prior to the War of 1812.[60] Grundy had previously practiced law, which had rendered him a powerful manipulator who understood how to engage an audience. [61] Polk modeled himself on Grundy while continuing his legal studies so that by the time he formally entered politics he was already a shrewd operative.

Finally, with his education complete, Polk began to develop the professional life that would make his own political career possible. Polk graduated from the University of North Carolina at the top of his class.[62] In 1820, he was admitted to the Bar Association and set up his own practice in Columbia, North Carolina. The following year, Polk entered into a partnership with Madison Caruthers and became head of a legal firm.[63] From the combination of Polk's law practice and his family's investment in slaveholding, the Polk clan saw their fortunes rise elevating them into the upper echelons of Southern society.[64] Polk used this position to further advance his status by moving within distinguished social circles and in so doing one of the important people with whom Polk connected was the famed general and American icon, Andrew Jackson.

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[59] McCormac, *James K. Polk: A Political Biography*, 12.

[60] Sellers, *James K. Polk, Jacksonian,* vol. 1, 57-58.

[61] Ibid.

[62] George Hickman, *The Life and Public Services of the Hon. James K. Polk with a Compendium of his Speeches on Various Public Measures*, (New York: Burgess Stinger & Co., 1844), 6.

[63] Haynes, *James K. Polk and the Expansionist Impulse*, 12.

[64] Ibid. As a measure of the drastic change in the Polk family holdings, Samuel Polk went from possessing around 50 acres of land and a handful of slaves in 1812 to leaving his son James 2,000 acres of land and 50 slaves in his will upon his death in 1827. Sellers, *James K. Polk, Jacksonian, 1795-1843*, vol. 1, 33-36. Hugh Brogan and Charles Mosley, *American Presidential Families*, (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1993), 378-380.

Under General Jackson, Polk began his political career arguing for expansion and the idea of the frontiersman. After youthful years envisioning Jackson as a hero during the War of 1812, Polk met him as an adult. The general continued Jeffersonian expansionist policy and became a mentor to Polk during the 1820s. Jackson was the embodiment of martial manhood and a rising star in the Democratic political world. Much like Polk, he was from Tennessee and part of the rising planter class.[65] It would be Jackson's influence and dedication to settling the frontier that solidified the glorification of the frontier myth within the young politician's mind. Jackson revived Polk's desire to participate in martial manhood. The Tennessee state militia elected Polk as captain of the local cavalry regiment with a recommendation from Jackson despite the young man being sickly and having no military experience. Eventually Polk advanced to the position of colonel.[66] He sought to live up to the expectations of masculinity set forth by his father and follow in the footsteps of his grandfather, but maintained his political career as his primary focus.

Frontier life and economic ambition merged when Polk entered politics. Initially, he occupied a seat in the lower state legislature, which he won through an effective grass-roots level campaign in Maury County and by further developing the connections he had made in the political world.[67] Polk used the Jeffersonian value of involving the common man in politics in order to build his constituent base.[68] He understood that his

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[65] Sellers, *James K. Polk, Jacksonian, 1795-1843*, vol. 1, 39.

[66] Ibid., 74.

[67] Haynes, *James K. Polk and the Expansionist Impulse,* 13.

[68] Ibid.

constituency was modest frontier farmers. In this way, the frontier life that Polk had grown up with served to provide him with political power. With his career successfully established, Polk married his long time love, Sarah Childress, in 1824.[69] Polk's professional life was formed out of the foundations he had growing up and it would be these same ideals that Polk employed to advance his career.

As his political career commenced, Polk realized that the frontier was not just a legacy but also presented the opportunity for personal development. This was to be the first example of Polk using his political rhetoric in order to profit financially from the expansion of the frontier. In 1819, the Governor of Kentucky, Isaac Shelby, and Andrew Jackson purchased territory between the Tennessee and Mississippi Rivers from the Chickasaw tribe. [70] By 1823, the majority of open land claims in North Carolina had been satisfied leaving the rest of the Western District lands to Tennessee.[71] However, Polk's alma mater, the University of North Carolina, presented the Tennessee legislature with claims to more of the Western District lands, a motion that was supported by Polk's mentor, Felix Grundy.[72]

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[69] John Bumgarner, *Sarah Childress Polk: A Biography of a Remarkable First Lady*, (Jefferson: McFarland & Co. Inc., 1997), 27. Anson Nelson and Fanny Nelson, *Memorials of Sarah Childress Polk*, (New York: A. F. D. & Co., 1892), 45.

[70] Fredrick Gulp, *Gibson Country Past and Present: The First General History of One of West Tennessee's Pivotal Counties*, (Puducah: Turner Publishing Company, 1996), 3. This territory makes up modern day Tennessee and Kentucky. The Chickasaw signed the Treaty of Hopewell in 1785 along with the Cherokee and Choctaw. Their right to the sovereignty of their land was supposed to be respected. Continual encroachment by settlers, however, complicated this legality. This prompted Jackson and Shelby to buy the land from the Chickasaw.

[71] Tennessee State Senate, *The Land Laws of Tennessee*, ed. Henry Whitney, (Chattanooga: J. M. Deardorff & Sons, 1891), 236.

[72] Sellers, *James K. Polk, Jacksonian, 1795-1843*, vol. 1, 82.

This conflict brought the legacy of the frontier into Polk's political life and presented an opportunity to ascertain how the image of the frontiersman might be applied to civic leadership. Polk did not wish the lands to be taken from the state of Tennessee but rather to be sold to Tennesseans.[73] The famous pioneer Davy Crockett supported Polk's opposition to the measure and desired poor white farmers in the area to have first choice of the land.[74] This distribution of land to the common man reflected the agrarian empire championed by the Jeffersonian principles of Polk's childhood. Slotkin described this empire as a reflection of the ideals of civilization, and one that celebrated race and Christianity.[75] Consequently, blacks and Native Americans were excluded from this frontier empire as they were considered uncivilized.[76] Crockett, on the other hand, epitomized this civilized image, which made his support for the common man powerful. Crockett's rhetoric was imbued with the image of the frontier and the cultural legacy therein and the pioneer suggested that the land of the Western District belonged to those who had settled nearby.[77] Though this was not a convincing argument for the Tennessee House of Representatives, Crockett's constituents, particularly the poor farmers, supported him.[78] Through Crockett, Polk saw the rhetorical power that the heroic image of the frontiersman retained among the common people.

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[73] "Mr. Polk and the Poor Man," *Whig Banner*, August 24, 1844, in *Whig Banner Collection*: *May 11-October 26, 1844*, ed. C. C. Norvell, (Nashville, B. R. McKennie, 1844), 172.

[74] Ibid.

[75] Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment*, 70.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Michael Wallis, *David Crockett: The Lion of the West*, (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2011), 187-188.

[78] Ibid.

Ultimately, Polk and Crockett were not successful in their attempt to give farmers first rights to the open land. However, the land in the Western District was opened to surveyors, which Polk used for personal profit.[79] In spite of his speeches emphasizing the importance of the common man, he was one of the first to enter into business arrangements as a result of the land appropriation. Historian Henry Nash Smith noted that despite Jeffersonian agrarianism championing the common man, the benefactors of such policies were, in fact, the wealthy slave owners.[80] The status of the Polk family was such that they were one of the first to be informed of the opening of territory.[81] Together Polk and his father created a surveying company in which Polk researched outstanding warrants while his father oversaw the physical surveying.[82] Not only did the two of them make a large profit on the actual surveying but they were also awarded large tracts of land for their work by the state government, some of which they sold for profit and some of which they incorporated into their own plantations.[83] Smith stated that land made the settler a citizen and was a symbol of independence. Land ownership equated to political power, therefore, the frontier provided the opportunity to acquire power.[84] Slotkin argued that the frontier myth was a smokescreen obscuring social hierarchy; it promoted the average man as the hero while in reality it was the rich who profited from the opening of

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[79] Sellers, *James K. Polk, Jacksonian, 1795-1843*, vol. 1, 83, 63.

[80] Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land: the American West as Myth and Symbol*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950), 126, 129-130.

[81] Archibald D. Murphey to Thomas Ruffin, 21 July 1822, in *The Papers of Archibald D. Murphey*, vol. 1, ed. William Henry Hoyt, (Raleigh: E. M. Uzzell & Co. State Printers: 1914), 248.

[82] Sellers, *James K. Polk, Jacksonian, 1795-1843*, vol. 1, 63.

[83] Ibid.

[84] Smith, *Virgin Land,* 126.

land.[85] Such was the case with Polk, and it continued to be so throughout his political career. Polk was not forthright about his ambitions; instead he continued to use the allure of the frontier legacy to divert attention from the true purpose of the expansion – profit.

Polk entered national politics during the presidency of his childhood hero, Andrew Jackson, which granted Polk a new political environment in which to utilize his image of the frontier. Jackson rose quickly in the political world; firstly becoming a senator in 1824 and then deciding to run for president.[86] Jackson's military record also helped gain the favor of the public. Though he would ultimately lose the election, his public image and stance on western expansion fostered support for his candidacy once again from poor white farmers.[87] Polk himself ran for the position of Tennessee sixth district representative to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1825, and with Jackson's support, won office by a comfortable margin. The second time Polk was elected it was by a much smaller margin.[88] Polk spent his time as a representative fighting for expansion employing the skills he had learned as a young politician just as he had done in the Tennessee legislature.

Polk used Crockett's imagery of the frontiersman, from his time in the Tennessee state House, in addition to his knowledge of land appropriation, to continue to advocate for land expansion. In 1827 and 1828, Polk tried to persuade Congress to appropriate

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[85] Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment*, 138-139.

[86] John M. Belohlavek, *Andrew Jackson: Principle and Prejudice*, (New York: Routledge Press, 2016), 49.

[87] Ibid., 50-51.

[88] Joseph M. Pukl Jr., "James K. Polk's Early Congressional Campaigns of 1825 and 1827," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 39, no.4, (Winter 1980), 448.

unclaimed land for his home state of Tennessee.[89] Polk argued that the bill itself would provide more land for the poor settlers of the Western District allowing them to make a better life for themselves by farming larger pieces of land on this frontier.[90] With the help of Crockett once again, Polk attempted to persuade Congress to approve the measure. Once again Crockett echoed the glorification of the frontiersman as he had in 1824. He supported Polk's claims that while the land was not valuable for large-scale crops, most of the poor farmers of Tennessee would greatly benefit from the appropriation.[91] Despite Polk using the façade of support for the common man as he had also done in 1824, underlying motivations existed for Polk's support of land appropriation.

Polk's interest in the matter, in fact, was not solely for the average farmer, but rather for his own personal gain. Anti-Jacksonians of the House quickly pointed out that Polk's home state had received Cherokee lands that the state had then sold off to mostly wealthy landowners. Additionally, Polk's opponents claimed that the Tennessee legislature also had strong connections to some of the most active surveyors in the state.[92] The Polk family was well connected and still had many friends in the Tennessee legislature, particularly Colonel William Polk who had a vested interest in the land appropriation.[93] If the bill were to pass, the Polk family would be one of the first provided

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[89] Sellers, *James K. Polk, Jacksonian, 1795-1843,* vol. 1, 123.

[90] John Purdy to James K. Polk, 14 February 1828, in U.S. Senate, *Public Documents*, vol. 339, (Washington D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1838), 14.

[91] Sellers, *James K. Polk, Jacksonian, 1795-1843,* vol. 1, 125.

[92] Ibid., 126.

[93] William Harrison Polk, *Polk and Kinsmen*, (Louisville: Bradley and Gilbert Inc., 1843), 143. William Polk was Polk's first cousin once removed, cousin to his grandfather Ezekiel Polk. Despite an initial disagreement with William Polk about the cession of the Western District lands to Tennessee instead of the University of North Carolina, where William Polk was a trustee, Polk later sold available lots to his

access to survey and make claims on the appropriated land as Polk and his father had done in 1824. This debate over land appropriation revealed Polk's consistency as an expansionist for his own benefit. He had learned to use the image of the frontiersman and republicanism as connected concepts in his rhetoric as Crockett had during their debate in the state legislature. In addition, these principles that Polk valued could be used for personal advantage. Notwithstanding motivation to pass the bill, however, Polk faced heavy opposition.

This opposition forced Polk to settle for a much smaller amount of land for his home state. Ultimately, Crockett dropped his support of the bill, thereby, effectively killing the measure.[94] From this point onwards, the employment of the image of the frontiersman in order to hide his own ambition became a recurring theme throughout Polk's life. Polk became further involved in the politics of land expansion as his friend and idol, Andrew Jackson, ran for president in 1828. Expansionist policy and the image of the frontiersman came together under Jackson in a systematic fashion to usher in a new era of expansion.

Jackson represented the American hero – a frontiersman and an Indian fighter – someone who represented the martial manhood that Polk keenly promoted. In 1828, this image would be essential to Jackson's presidential election. Polk was more than happy to

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cousin in 1824. Polk also tried to make sure these lands were made available in the subsequent resurfacing of the land appropriation issue in 1837 and 1845. Frank N. Magill, *The American Presidents: The Office and Men*, (Danbury: Scholastic Library Publishing, 1989), 220.

[94] "Mr. Polk and the Occupants," *Whig Banner*, October 12, 1844, in *Whig Banner Collection*, ed. C. C. Norvell, 276. The land appropriation for Tennessee was postponed and brought up in the Senate again in 1837 with relatively little support. The measure itself did not pass until Polk became president in 1845. Following the appropriation of the Western District lands passing in the federal legislature in 1846, the Polk family did benefit financially.

lend his support and actively campaigned for Jackson, but John Quincy Adams and Henry Clay ran a smear campaign against Jackson using Democratic Republican newspapers such as the *Baltimore Republican*.[95] Polk's solution to this was to gather depositions from men who had served under Jackson to regenerate the image of the war hero for a collection of testimonials published in the late summer of 1828 as a vindication for Jackson.[96] For Polk, above all, Jackson embodied the qualities of the frontiersman that he admired.

Although Polk did not embody the experiences that his rhetoric highlighted, he recognized that the nation responded well to the image of the hero. Slotkin argued that the developers of the frontier legend, particularly politicians, were people who drew these experiences from already existing stories.[97] Polk exemplified Slotkin's argument as he was evidently not a frontiersman, but rather lived vicariously through Jackson and the stories surrounding him. This was the means by which Polk saw the attributes of masculinity, religion, and patriotism come alive. Jackson's vindication showed the general as a heroic man and a valiant warrior. In a description of the First Seminole War, an account by fellow soldiers recounted that the general left the frontier of Georgia in a

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[95] James K. Polk to Andrew Jackson, 13 April, 1828, in *The Papers of Andrew Jackson: 1825-1828*, ed. Harold D. Moser, J Clint Clifft, and Wyatt C. Wells, (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2002), 444-446.

[96] Thomas Leonard, *James K. Polk: A Clear and Unquestionable Destiny*, (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources Inc., 2001), 16. Major Henry Lee, *A Vindication to Character and Public Services of Andrew Jackson; in Replay to the Richmond Address, signed by Chapman Johnson and to Other Electioneering Calumnies*, (Boston: True and Greene, 1828), 3-4. Originally, this collection of depositions was published in the Nashville Republican. This deposition collection distinctly mirrors the defense of the character of Ezekiel Polk that Polk had published in 1844.

[97] Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment*, 110.

peaceful state before his departure for Florida in 1817.[98] This was not, however, the case; in fact, the settlers in the area were left unprotected, but the pro-Jackson propaganda avoided mentioning such details. In Jackson's place, Captain Obed Wright was sent to secure the Georgia frontier, but in so doing massacred a village of Chehaw.[99] The account cited above told how Captain Wright had destroyed the peace that Jackson had created and the general rejection of the incident, "…when our own patriot [Jackson] protested against an outrage on humanity, a violation of faith, and usurpation of authority, acquiescence in which would have stained with disgrace our common nature and our common country…"[100] Jackson, in this account, was not only a warrior who restored peace, but a man devoted to the principles of Christian morals such as trust, respect, and the pride of his country. Jackson was portrayed as a man who cared about the values of the American nation rather than as a single-minded warrior. This was the image that Polk not only promoted during Jackson's election but continued to endorse in order to inspire heroism and draw attention away from expansionist ambitions.

In the election of 1828, Jackson captured both the electoral and the popular vote, becoming the seventh president of the United States.[101] Throughout Jackson's presidency, Polk remained a loyal follower, helping the president pass legislation, and, in particular, bills concerning westward expansion. The most important of Jackson's measures was the Indian Removal Act of 1830, which forcibly moved thousands of Native Americans from

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[98] Lee, *A Vindication to Character and Public Services of Andrew Jackson,* 35.

[99] David Heidler and Jeanne Heidler, *Old Hickory's War: Andrew Jackson and the Quest for Empire*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1996) 161, 165-166.

[100] Lee, *A Vindication to Character and Public Services of Andrew Jackson,* 35.

[101] Leonard, *James K. Polk: A Clear and Unquestionable Destiny*, 16-17.

their lands east of the Mississippi to west of the river in order to open up territory for white settlers.[102] The Indian Removal Act illustrated two levels of racial superiority operating at the time; the most obvious form of which was slavery, which was a priority of slave owning men such as Jackson himself. Additionally, there was the obvious racial superiority displayed towards the Native Americans. To remove these peoples from their land so that white settlers could take possession of the area signified that Jackson felt that they did not use the land properly and, therefore, did not need it. As Greenberg stated, this argument was one that politicians revisited when promoting expansion and denoted that racial inferiority was a feature of the legacy of expansion.[103] In addition, Indian removal fostered the expansion of slavery making Jackson's frontier also a racial one. Slotkin argued that proponents of the frontier myth depicted the frontier as a racialized boundary dividing savagery and civilization. This was especially true for the expansion of agrarianism following Indian Removal.[104] The frontier became a simplified representation of good versus evil where government-supported Anglo-Saxon settlement was equated with the spread of civilization and virtue.

Accordingly, Polk became an active part of Jackson's crusade to colonize the West. As a member of the House of Representatives, Polk ensured that the funds and policies required by Jackson to accomplish Indian Removal were approved. In debates in the House, Polk promoted frontier expansion through the American values that he had internalized since childhood. Democratic representative Wilson Lumpkin stated, in a

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[102] Ibid., 17.

[103] Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood*, 76.

[104] Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment*, 310-311.

debate in the House in 1831, that he and the political friends of Jackson, Polk included, sought to promote, "…wisdom, benevolence, and [Christian] philanthropy," through the Indian Removal Act.[105] The treaties for discussion included schools, churches, and farming supplies for Native Americans in order to integrate them into American society. Removing Native Americans from their land, however, went beyond the conquest of land, instead revealing a paternalism in which other races were treated like children. Sloktin has argued that racial paternalism was a method of not only promoting Anglo-Saxon supremacy but, also, of creating a system of dominance in which people of color remained in a dependent position. This was true beyond a black-white dynamic as racial paternalism was experienced by Native Americans and subsequently also Mexicans.[106] Additionally, Lumpkin's remarks demonstrate the incorporation of Christianity into the tenets of nineteenth century paternalism. With Christianity equated with civilization, religion became a cornerstone of frontier conquest. The intersection of religion, race, and conquest became the priority of the Jackson administration, and all the while, Polk continued to support Indian Removal.[107] Polk's time in Congress during Jacksonian expansion exposed him to this culmination of ideologies. As expansion continued to be a feature of American foreign policy, cultural ideologies continued to be a part of expansionist policy.

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[105] "Indian Treaties," February 25, 1831, in United States Congress, *Register of Debates in Congress, Comprising the Leading Debates and Incidents of the Second Session of the Twenty-First Congress*, vol., VII, (Washington D. C., Gales and Seaton, 1831), 791-792.

[106] Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment*, 235-237.

[107] "Indian Treaties," in *Register of Debates in Congress,* vol., VII, 823.

During Jackson's administration, Polk dealt with several years of difficult political maneuvering that further developed his rhetorical skills.[108] Not only was the Jackson administration notorious for corruption, such as appointing his supporters to prominent government positions and embezzlement, but the quality of Jackson's public image suffered as well. This was particularly true after Polk became Speaker of the House in 1835.[109] During his time as the Speaker, Polk further developed his rhetorical skills as he faced heavy opposition from the Adams Whig faction on many issues in Congress. Polk had to be assertive in order to pass legislation particularly against heavy Whig opposition.[110] This divisiveness only grew more fraught with the issue of the potential annexation of Texas following the Texas Revolution.

Once again the Polk family was deeply involved in the settling of this new frontier and the issue of annexation became a personal one for Polk. His great-uncle and two of his cousins were not only settlers in Texas but also fighting against Mexican forces. Thomas J. Hardeman, Polk's great-uncle even attempted to convince Polk to argue for the United States to intervene in the Texas Revolution by using his position as Speaker.[111] The issue was the political association of the South, which would have had Texas admitted as a slave state if annexed. The issue of slavery made Texas's annexation

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[108] Sellers, *James K. Polk, Jacksonian, 1795-1843*, vol. 1, 304.

[109] Ibid., 306-307. "Expenses of the Government-Speech of Mr. Slade of Vermont," February 22, 1839, in *Congressional Globe Containing Sketches of the Debates and Proceedings of the Twenty-Fifth Congress*, *3rd Session*, ed. Francis Preston Blair and John Cook Rives, vol. VII, (Washington D. C.: Globe Office of the Editors, 1839), 325.

[110] Sellers, *James K. Polk, Jacksonian, 1795-1843*, vol. 1, 304.

[111] Thomas J. Hardeman to James K. Polk, 31 March, 1836, in *Correspondence of James K. Polk*, vol. 3, ed. Herbert Weaver, (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1975), 567-568.

difficult to justify to Northern Whigs, who saw it only as a means by which the South would gain more political and economic power.[112] The issue split the House along party and geographical lines. After years of dealing with these political stalemates in the House, Polk resigned in order to run for the governorship of Tennessee in 1839.[113] Despite the fact that Polk moved to another position of government, he remained focused on expansion.

Polk won the governorship and concentrated upon the issues that had continued to plague Tennessee since his election to the state legislature, that is, poverty and expansion.[114] The Panic of 1837 had devastated the cotton market and the state of Tennessee was still struggling to revive its business by the time Polk entered his governorship. [115] Polk tried to provide funds for Tennessee banks in order to promote investment, but Whig and moderate Democratic opposition prevented Polk from realizing this goal. This failure to help the state with it economic strife left a stain on Polk's public image. In his re-election bid for governor in 1841, Polk lost to James C. Jones and then failed again in another attempt at the governorship in 1843.[116] In 1844, Polk decided to step back into the national political arena. This time, however, Polk set his sights on a much bigger prize, that of the vice presidency.

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[112] Sellers, *James K. Polk, Jacksonian, 1795-1843*, vol. 1, 337.

[113] Hickman, *The Life and Public Services of the Hon. James K. Polk with a Compendium of his Speeches on Various Public Measures*, 14.

[114] "James K. Polk," in Tennessee State House of Representatives, J*ournal of the House of Representatives of the State of Tennessee at the Twenty-Third General Assembly*, (Knoxville: Gifford & Eastman, 1839), 18.

[115] McCormac, *James K. Polk: A Political Biography,* 192.

[116] Ibid., 207.

Polk's campaign for vice president brought expansion to the forefront of Democratic politics and revived his arguments for aggressive frontier expansion. Since many regarded Martin Van Buren as the Democratic frontrunner, Polk considered that his best chance was as a vice presidential candidate. The Whig Party were unpopular as they, "[wished] to evade any questions on Oregon or Texas and the probable application of Florida & Iowa to be admitted into the Union, as well as the Tariff," meaning they were against annexation despite popular opinion being in favor of it.[117] Accordingly, Van Buren shocked the Democratic Party when he shared views that were in opposition to slavery and annexation and these views cost Van Buren the support of his party.[118] Until the spring of 1844, Polk had not expressed his views on expansion. Once, however, Polk shared his position on annexation, he became a popular presidential candidate for the Democratic Party, particularly in the South.[119] Annexation became the most critical issue of Polk's campaign, and it served as the climax of Polk's dedication to frontier expansion. Polk used all his rhetorical skills to promote the annexation issue in a manner that would unite the nation rather than further dividing it. For this reason, Polk instead focused on the heroic legacy of the frontier in order to promote annexation. He brought together the cultural systems of masculinity, race, and nationalism in order to glorify the frontiersman, presenting expansion into Texas as a continuation of the frontier.

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[117] Cave Johnson to James K. Polk, March 29, 1844, in *Correspondence of James K. Polk, vol. 7, 1844,* ed. Wayne Cutler, Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1989), 98.

[118] Michael A. Morrison, "Martin Van Buren, Democracy, and the Partisan Politics of Texas Annexation," *The Journal of Southern History* 61, no. 4, (Nov. 1995), 696-697.

[119] Sellers, *James K. Polk, Jacksonian, 1795-1843*, vol. 1, 420-421.

Polk first used the legacy of the frontier in response to Northern Whigs who had threatened to make his campaign difficult. Salmon P. Chase and Thomas Heaton wrote to Polk after hearing of his nomination for president. The two men served on the city council in Cincinnati and wished to see where Polk stood on the issue of annexation. Chase and Heaton told Polk that only through outlawing slavery in the territory would the city of Cincinnati agree to the annexation.[120] Chase and Heaton were free-soil Whigs, which meant that they believed in the expansion of the United States for the settlement of free white men, but disapproved of the spread of slavery.[121] Polk wrote back to the men in an attempt to bridge a political gap and present himself as a more appealing candidate. He tried to win over his audience by claiming that the annexation of Texas was not a conquest but rather a rejoining of a territory to the nation: "I have no hesitation declaring that I am in favor of the immediate re-annexation of Texas to the territory and Government of the United States."[122] Polk also diverted attention from the increase in slaveholding territory by focusing on the overall expansion of territory that the free-soilers desired for their own political agenda.

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[120] Salmon P. Chase and the Committee of Cincinnati Citizens to James K. Polk, March 30, 1844, in *Correspondence of James K. Polk, vol. 7, 1844,* ed. Wayne Cutler, Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1989), 99.

[121] John Niven, *Salmon Chase: A Biography*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 117-118.

[122] James K. Polk to Salmon P. Chase and the Committee of Cincinnati Citizens, April 23, 1844, in *Correspondence of James K. Polk, vol. 7, 1844,* ed. Wayne Cutler, 105. Polk claimed that Texas once belonged to the U.S. as agreed upon by the signing of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 until the U.S. and Spain ratified the sale of Florida in 1819. This statement is only partly true; the tip of the northeastern corner of modern day Texas was included in the Louisiana Purchase, which was stated in the Adams-Onís Treaty. In addition, claims of settlement were also legally weak. Filibuster James Long attempted to settle within Texas in the spring of 1819 during the Mexican War of Independence. Though Spanish authorities were weakened from fighting Mexican rebels since 1810, the Spanish authorities had chased Long out of Texas by late 1819. Therefore, any American claims on Texas were not legally strong. Ed Bradley, "Fighting for Texas, Filibuster James Long, the Adams-Onís Treaty, and the Monroe Administration," *The Southwest Historical Quarterly* 102, no. 3, (Jan. 1999), 326-328.

Polk addressed the threats and benefits posed by the addition of Texas to the Union but also of other territories. Polk also addressed the threat of Britain taking over Texas should the small republic be left as an independent nation.[123] He also stated that the defense of Texas against Britain or any other foreign power was an act of patriotism. Polk then questioned the patriotism of the Whigs in Cincinnati by indirectly asking whether they would allow these territories to be threatened and the nation to become insecure.[124] The image of the Texas Revolutionary corresponded well with the concept of the new heroic man.[125] Not only did Polk argue these revolutionary fighters sought to protect their nation but they also sought to advance the frontier. In this way, Polk conveyed the Texan Revolution into the narrative of the frontier legacy characterizing the men settling and fighting for Texas as true patriots, and questioning the loyalty of the Whigs who opposed the annexation. Yet, Polk did not seek to simply distance himself from the Whigs: rather he presented a common ground on which the two parties could agree.

Polk used the prospect of adding more territory to the nation in the north in order to make his political platform appealing to all parties. The presidential hopeful posed the issue of Oregon Territory as a concession to the opposition in order to promote his expansionist agenda.

> Let Texas be re-annexed and the authority and laws of the United States be established and maintained within her limits, as also in the Oregon Territory, and let the fixed policy of our Government be, not to permit Great Britain or any other foreign power to plant

[123] Polk to Chase and the Committee of Cincinnati Citizens, April 23, 1844, 106.

[124] Ibid.

[125] Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment*, 163.

> a colony or hold dominion over any portion of the people or territory of either.[126]

Polk used the Pacific Northwest as an object of enticement for the free-soilers. Upon annexation, Oregon Territory would become a free state.[127] Though against the institution of slavery, free-soilers still reinforced the racism of the frontier. They promoted the legacy of the frontier of the Puritans, which consisted of removing the native people from the area in order to settle new territory.[128] This version of the frontier promoted by the free-soilers also promoted racial superiority.[129] Both Northern and Southern expansionists sought to expand their territory and the Indian fighter narrative was still prevalent in both. In addition, many free-soilers did not want blacks to be allowed to live in new territories such as Oregon.[130] Racism was a large part of the frontier legacy – not just for the South but as a part of the culture of imperialist America. Polk used the free-soilers' desire for expansion in order to propose that the presidential nominee had common interests with the gentlemen of Cincinnati.

Polk used the desire for more territory to deflect concerns that Texas provided the South with more political power. In this way, Polk used the prospect of economic opportunity to bring the free-soilers to his side. Polk utilized a technique he had observed President Jackson practice during his election campaign of 1828; when dealing with

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[126] Polk to Chase and the Committee of Cincinnati Citizens, April 23, 1844, 106.

[127] Major L. Wilson, "Manifest Destiny and Free-Soil: The Triumph of Negative Liberalism in the 1840s," *The Historian* 31, no. 1, (November 1, 1968), 41-42.

[128] Ibid.

[129] Slotkin*, The Fatal Environment*, 44-45.

[130] Once Oregon was annexed in 1846 the Black Laws were passed preventing blacks from immigrating to the territory. These Laws were not officially repealed until the 1920s. Thus, the racial frontier was a long living legacy even in the North. Rebecca Stefoff, *Oregon*, (New York: Marshall Cavendish, 2006), 60.

territorial acquisition that threatened to divide political parties, one could instead focus on the heroism and opportunity provided by the frontier. The basis of American progress lay in frontier expansion for the benefit of white males. It was not that the free-soilers were against expansion; in fact the opposite was true. The issue was slavery. By offering a compromise it was Polk's hope to defuse the partisan division over the issue of expansion. Polk saw competing for the Pacific Northwest with the British as a solution to the political divisions that threatened to ruin his campaign.

Accordingly, Polk used the frontier in order to maneuver around the political divisions over slavery. After the *Cincinnati Gazette* published Polk's official support for the annexation of Texas, several Whig leaders rebuked Polk's stance. One such man was Henry Clay who argued that Polk's stance on Texas meant that he was trying to increase the Democratic Party's power in the South.[131] Polk defended himself against this attack by strengthening his position on the annexation of both Texas and Oregon, making him the most prominent candidate with a coherent position on expansion. This stance allowed Polk to appeal to the public at the close of the election of 1844 while divisions among the Democrats weakened Van Buren and Lewis Cass, allowing Polk to take the Democratic nomination.[132] The general election against Clay was even closer and in some states less than two hundred votes separated the two candidates.[133] Polk just managed to gain enough votes to win the presidency. The imperialist objectives for which Polk had been

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[131] C. C. N., "From the Editor," *The Whig Banner*, June 2, 1844, in *Whig Banner Collection*, ed. C. C. Norvell, 60.

[132] John C. Pinherio*, Manifest Ambition: James K. Polk and Civil-Military Relations During the Mexican War*, (Westport: Praeger Security International, 2007), 25

[133] Charles Sellers, *James K. Polk, Continentalist, 1843-1846*, (Norwalk: Easton Press, 1987), 60.

preparing had now become a reality. As president he now had the power to expand the frontier for economic profit.

Subsequently, Polk invoked the legacy of the frontier in order to justify a war of expansion with Mexico. Underneath this rhetoric was the same ambition that had always been present in Polk's life, that is, the desire to increase profit. Yet, surprisingly, Polk's ambition was provided with a boost by the incumbent president. At the end of his term as president, John Tyler decided to approve the annexation of Texas, thereby laying the groundwork for further continental expansion.[134] This decision also authorized one of the top priorities of the new president in his inaugural speech to be the inclusion of Texas into the Union. Polk's presidency began with a speech characterizing the war with Mexico as a defense of the frontier. On March 4, 1845, he stood before a large crowd prepared to show the nation and the world how his presidency would define foreign policy. He did so by delivering a powerful speech on the duties of the nation as well as its capabilities. Polk addressed the tension among foreign nations but, inserting the bravado and toughness that characterized the masculinity of the frontiersman into his speech, also warned of the responsibility of the United States to react should other nations disagree with Polk's agenda.

> I regard the question of annexation as belonging exclusively to the United States and Texas. They are independent powers competent to contract, and foreign nations have no right to interfere with them or to take exceptions to their reunion…To Texas the reunion is important, because the strong protecting arm of our Government would be extended over her, and the vast resources of her fertile

[134] Amy Greenberg, *A Wicked War: Polk, Clay, and the 1846 U.S. Invasion of Mexico*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012), 61-62.

> soil and genial climate would be speedily developed, while the safety of New Orleans and of our whole southwestern frontier against hostile aggression, as well as the interests of the whole Union, would be promoted by it.[135]

Polk did not fear the prospect of war with Mexico and even claimed that Mexico had no claim to Texas. His stance was aggressive as was his portrayal of the frontier culture. In his first speech as president, Polk defended the settlement of Texas by Americans. Yet this statement was more than a warning to Mexico about the futility of resistance to Texas annexation; it was also a statement of racial superiority built into the ideas of American imperialism and the development of the frontier.

Polk's discourse on the protection of the Texas frontier was embedded with the racial and masculine characteristics of the frontier myth similar to those under Jacksonian expansion. The president stated that Texas would be developed to its fullest capacity implying that the Mexican citizens living there before the Texan Revolution were inferior to the civilizing power of the American man. Slotkin has demonstrated that the literature of the mid-1840s described the Mexican people as similar to Native Americans; they were incapable of making land productive. Taking Texas from the Mexicans was a justifiable action because Americans used the land in a much more productive way just as taking land from other unproductive Native American groups was rationalized throughout the nation's history.[136] Similarly, Greenberg stated that by treating Mexicans as an indigenous population they were deemed racially inferior and without a strong claim to

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[135] James K. Polk, "Inaugural Speech of James Knox Polk," (speech, Washington D.C., March 4, 1845), The Avalon Project, Lillian Goldman Law Library, Yale Law School, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/polk.asp.

[136] Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment*, 180-181.

their own land.[137] Therefore, the call to annex Texas was not confiscating land from another nation, rather it was simply a continuation of the frontier. Polk did not stop, however, at Texas's annexation; he defined the very character of the United States as the imperial power that had been the conquering force of the North American continent.

The following statement by Polk demonstrates how racism intertwined with expansionism and the frontier myth. Not only did the president attribute the success of the nation to racial conquest, but he directly connected the legacy of racism to the fight to protect Texas.

> The title of numerous Indian tribes to vast tracts of country has been extinguished; new States have been admitted into the Union; new Territories have been created and our jurisdiction and laws extended over them. As our population has expanded, the Union has been cemented and strengthened…It is confidently believed that our system may be safely extended to the utmost bounds of our territorial limits, and that as it shall be extended the bonds of our Union, so far from being weakened, will become stronger.[138]

Polk explained that the strength of the nation came from the successive conquests throughout the country's history. He attributed the decimation of native tribes to being part of the increased strength of the nation. Slotkin describes this as the pinnacle of the American frontier myth, that is, the construction of a nation through violence.[139] However, violence was not just the method used to enlarge the nation; it was also the means by which men expressed their masculinity and patriotism.[140] The conquest of Indigenous peoples not only displayed the masculine nature of the United States, but

[137] Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood*, 25-27.

[138] Polk, "Inaugural Speech of James Knox Polk," (speech, Washington D.C., March 4, 1845).

[139] Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence*, 5.

[140] Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood*, 25.

apparently made American men the better for it. The interconnectedness of the issues of race, imperialism, and masculinity now come to the forefront of Polk's rhetoric. The inclusion of the mythologized history of the United States after the discussion of war with Mexico connected racism and history together. Yet, this history of imperialism was not enough for Polk. He declared that imperialism would continue to be the future of the United States until the nation covered the continent.

In his inaugural speech, Polk included the conquest of the Oregon Territory in an attempt to bring Northern expansionists into his imperialistic legacy. Slotkin has revealed that the expansionist rhetoric, particularly in the South, had rarely engaged with Oregon and generally did not engage with the frontier mythology unlike the discussion over Texas.[141] Polk did, however, perform a politically astute action by including a group that was outside of the Democratic Party – the free-soilers. The president attempted to use rhetoric to bring the nation together by including expansion both in the North and South with the narrative of the frontier legacy. Therefore, Polk's expansionism concealed political divisions by employing the idea that the nation was continuing its frontier legacy on all possible fronts.

Polk addressed the acquisition of the Oregon Territory using as similar frontiersman imagery as he had done with Texas to create an idealistic image of the rising conflict.

> Our title to the country of the Oregon is "clear and unquestionable," and already are our people preparing to perfect

[141] Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment*, 181.

> that title by occupying it with their wives and children…our people, increasing to many millions, have filled the eastern valley of the Mississippi, adventurously ascended the Missouri to its headsprings, and are already engaged in establishing the blessings of self-government in valleys of which the rivers flow to the Pacific. The world beholds the peaceful triumphs of the industry of our emigrants. To us belongs the duty of protecting them adequately wherever they may be upon our soil.[142]

Polk discussed the U.S. claim to the Oregon Territory as the continuation of a long history of conquest that had taken the American people across the continent. The conquest of Oregon was a testament to the conquering spirit of the United States. The aggressive nature of conquest was the behavior to which Polk was referring in this statement. He did not distinguish his attitude toward conquest in the North or the South but rather addressed the settlement of Oregon as part of a test of the American character. By addressing Oregon in this way Polk not only brought the territory into the frontier legacy, he also developed a claim to the land by right of conquest.

Polk dismissed Britain's entitlement to the Oregon Territory by reason of the claims of American settlers. He equated the processes of settlement in Texas and in Oregon. Consistency and a clear policy of claiming the land upon which Americans settled made expansion a unified plan that was above party politics. Additionally, it promoted the imperial ambition of acquiring both territories at once. Frontier imperialism was the ideological key to Polk's foreign policy along with the concepts of martial manhood, patriotism, and racial superiority. The president's first speech made it clear that the administration's primary objective was to acquire the land on the borders of the nation. In this way, Polk justified taking territory by force.

[142] Polk, "Inaugural Speech of James Knox Polk," (speech, Washington D.C., March 4, 1845).

The war itself had not begun by the time Polk stepped into office, and it was not initiated without some stimulus. The first course of action for Polk was to attempt to negotiate the border with Mexico. By late 1845, however, Polk's ambitions exceeded Texas. In 1842, geologist James D. Dana had discovered gold in the Sacramento Basin, during his time in the United States Exploring Expedition under Lieutenant Charles Wilkes. Rumors of gold being discovered in California impelled American settlers to begin filtering into the area.[143] By 1846, the U.S. Consul at Monterrey, Thomas O. Larkin, wrote to Secretary of State James Buchanan stating that small camps of Americans had developed along the river in search of gold over the last two to three years.[144] Polk himself had read the reports of the Wilkes Expedition in 1842 and was aware of the discovery of gold in Northern California.[145] The discovery of gold and the encroachment of Americans on this resource made California a valuable territory.

Despite the aggressive and idealistic speeches made by Polk at the beginning of his presidency, the political reality of the negotiations was that the administration was initially unable to make any significant progress with either Mexico or Britain. In the expansionist fever following the election, the president included the coastal territory in his expansionist ambition prompting further negotiations with Mexico.[146] However, the

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[143] Jesse D. Mason, *History of Amador County, California: With Illustrations and Biographical Sketches of its Prominent Men and Pioneers,* (Oakland: Thompson & West, 1881), 52. Though the influx of a large amount of settlers to California would occur after John Marshal's discovery in 1848, Dana's discovery did attract some Americans to settle in California.

[144] Thomas O. Larkin to James Buchanan, 4 May 1846, quoted in Mason, *History of Amador County, California,* 52.

[145] James K. Polk, April 9, 1846, diary entry, in *The Diary of James K. Polk During his Presidency*, 1845 to 1849, vol. 1, ed. Milo Milton Quaife, (Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1910), 324.

[146] James K. Polk, October 24, 1845, diary entry, in Ibid., 71-72.

Mexican government staunchly rejected negotiations with American diplomats in part because of strong political divisions in Mexico City.[147] Polk decided to send John Slidell to Mexico City in November, 1845, in order to negotiate the sale of California and to re-establish the diplomatic relations that had been lost over the Texan border dispute.[148] The unstable political system in Mexico was still an issue when Slidell arrived in Mexico City and the Mexican government refused to meet with him.[149] This placed negotiations with Mexico at an impasse in much the same way that negotiations with the British had fared in the first year of Polk's presidency.

Polk attempted to negotiate with the British for Oregon but faced similar diplomatic difficulties as those he had experienced with the Mexican government. The first problem Polk encountered was the influence that the Hudson's Bay Company held with many British politicians with regard to abstaining from negotiations.[150] In addition, Polk faced a political division among those who wanted the Oregon Territory extended to the 54th parallel and those who favored the practicality of settling on the 49th parallel.[151] Despite his strong expansionist rhetoric, Polk understood the disadvantages of fighting a war on two fronts. The president presented the British with an ultimatum in October,

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[147] Charles Callaghan to James K. Polk, 5 August, 1945, letter, in *Correspondence of James K. Polk*, vol. X, ed. Wayne Cutler and James L. Rogers II, (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2004), 121.

[148] James K. Polk to John Slidell, 6 November, 1945, letter, in *Correspondence of James K. Polk*, vol. 10, ed. Wayne Cutler and James L. Rogers II, 350-351. Slidell was chosen by Polk due to his knowledge of the Spanish language which Polk hoped would help establish better relations with the Mexican diplomats.

[149] Greenberg, *A Wicked War*, 79.

[150] Lois McLane to James K. Polk, 4 August, 1945, letter, in *The Correspondence of James K. Polk*, vol. X, ed. Wayne Cutler and James L. Rogers II, 115-116.

[151] Ibid.

1845, stating that the joint occupation of the Oregon Territory would end within one year, thereby, pressuring the British to reach an agreement.[152] By late November, the British had not agreed to any definite terms obliging Polk to be more forceful in his negotiations. Diplomatic failures also provoked criticism of the president's leadership and determination to obtain both Texas and Oregon as he had promised to do in his campaign. It appeared that the talk of martial manhood and the celebrated frontiersman was merely a façade which the president had used to mobilize support from the nation.

Polk addressed this criticism in his first annual speech in which he used the now familiar language of the frontier legacy to assure the public that he intended to fight in order to expand the nation. The president began his speech with a discussion on Mexico and informed the public of the attempted renewal of diplomatic relations with their neighboring country.[153] Yet Polk argued that because of the militant response from Mexico, he had sent General Taylor to Texas to occupy the disputed boundary between the Nueces River and the Rio Grande.[154] Polk maintained that the territory belonged to the United States as agreed upon by the legislature of the Republic of Texas at the conclusion of the Texas Revolution; therefore, it was Mexico who was in violation of the treaty. The president ended his discussion of Texas by stating that the army and navy were prepared if war did indeed break out.[155] Though Polk's discussion of Mexico was

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[152] James K. Polk, October 24, 1845, diary entry, in *The Diary of James K. Polk During his Presidency*, *1845 to 1849*, vol. 1, 67-70.

[153] James K. Polk, "First Annual Message," (speech, Washington D.C., December 2, 1845), The American Presidency Project, University of California Santa Barbara, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=29486.

[154] Ibid.

[155] Ibid.

more of a mild reaffirmation of his stance, his speech moved toward the aggressive and masculine rhetoric he had used in his campaign to describe his position on expansionism at the end of his first year as president.

Polk addressed the Oregon dispute aggressively and claimed that it was the continuation of the frontier that made the United States strong. In this way, Polk not only reinforced his resolution to take the territory as part of the American conquest of the continent but he did so in a way that glorified Oregon's settlement. Polk depicted the settlement of the Oregon Territory as a return to the expansionism of the early years of the United States. Polk then reinforced his stance on settlement by introducing a reward system for settlers. Claiming that he wished to reward the brave settlers in the territory, he proposed to Congress;

> That it will ultimately be wise and proper to make liberal grants of land to the patriotic pioneers who amidst privations and dangers lead the way through savage tribes inhabiting the vast wilderness intervening between our frontier settlements and Oregon, and who cultivate and are ever ready to defend the soil, I am fully satisfied.[156]

Polk did not address the question of Oregon as a compromise or as a minor issue. Settlement of any frontier continued to be a heroic legacy that Polk sought to protect. He did not allude to potential political divisions over the issue because they would have ruined the unity that the president was attempting to instill with his rhetoric. The connection to the frontier legacy was further developed by Polk's mention of the land grants. Much like those given to Polk's grandfather or to the soldiers of the Indian Wars during Jackson's presidency, land grants were a reward system for participation in

[156] Ibid.

conquest. Polk's proposed implementation of these land grants continued the frontier system of years past. The frontier legacy was further evoked in the Oregon question by addressing the nature of the men who settled the territory, reiterating the ideas of masculinity and patriotism.

The image of the pioneers of Oregon mirrored that of earlier pioneers such as Ezekiel Polk, who embodied the racial and physical superiority of the American character. These land grants that Polk proposed were to go to Indian fighters whom the president called brave and patriotic. Again, Polk drew a connection between defeating Native Americans and patriotism. He used the pioneer as a symbol of a goal larger than political parties. Smith has stated that the frontiersman was the singular image that characterized the development of the United States.[157] This attitude transformed the realities of expansion into a legendary quest for the nation. By calling the settlement of the Oregon Territory patriotic, Polk attempted to make his imperial desires worthy of being rewarded.

The president not only celebrated the violence of the conquest itself, but celebrated the continued readiness of the frontiersmen to use this violence should the nation go to war with Britain. Polk stated violence was part of the character of the American frontiersman. Slotkin described expansionist rhetoric of the 1840s and its use of glorified violence as a means of provoking war.[158] Polk used the same violence that Greenberg attributed to martial manhood to brand ferocity as the foundation of the nation

[157] Smith, *Virgin Land*, 135.

[158] Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence*, 5.

and the American character.[159] Polk reflected the aggressiveness of the frontiersman and reaffirmed this assertiveness in his speech crafted in order to make his stance on the Oregon Territory appear strong.

Due to the difficulties Polk faced during the negotiation process with the British, he had to assure the American public that he was a strong leader. He, therefore, argued for the complete occupation of the Oregon Territory and linked this aggressive stance to national pride. President Polk argued that by the rules of settlement the territory belonged to the United States, "The British proposition of compromise…can never for a moment be entertained by the United States without an abandonment of their just and dear territorial rights, their own self-respect, and the national honor."[160] Polk affirmed his stance on expansion as patriotic but also used it as justification for appropriating the whole of Oregon. The president also refused to let the nation compromise on the matter. The policy that the nation needed to spread across the entire continent could only be achieved by continuing a pattern of aggressive territorial expansion. This statement also denotes a link between national identity, aggression, and masculinity. The pioneers whom Polk mentioned were men who risked their lives to settle in the northwest. They epitomized the character of the nation that Polk intended to enforce as president. While this was a consistent theme in Polk's rhetoric, it is important to note that Polk attributed these characteristics of expansion to the northern half of the United States where his

[159] Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood*, 17.

[160] James K. Polk, "First Annual Message," http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=29486.

political party would not benefit through slavery or the potential of increasing the representative power of the Democratic Party. The frontiersman served as a uniting factor and as a rhetorical figure perfect for concealing imperial ambition beneath patriotism.

Ultimately, for all the speeches about pride and the honor of the nation Polk's motivations came down to the acquisition of land, which he slipped within his rhetoric of the frontier. Polk handled the sale of public land to citizens for a profit in much the same way that Polk had addressed the issue when he was a representative. He argued that the sale of land to frontiersmen should come with little profit to the government particularly as this group of people had helped settle the area.[161] The president was drawing on the Jeffersonian inclusion of all white men, thereby, combining the republican principles of the nation with the legacy of expansion.

Much like Polk's own experience in his family and political career, the conquest of the frontier needed to be rewarded. Moreover, the president argued that these men should be able to purchase the land they had helped to settle: "Experience has proved that no portion of our population are more patriotic than the hardy and brave men of the frontier, or more ready to obey the call of their country and to defend her rights and her honor whenever and by whatever enemy assailed."[162] Polk alluded to the nature of these men as patriotic; however, his statement also denoted that his men were an army that prevented the enemy from returning to the conquered territory. In Polk's words, the frontiersmen were ready to take up arms if the occasion should arise were they needed to

[161] Ibid.

[162] Ibid.

defend the land conquests of the country. They were not merely a symbol of the nation but also its protection. Their function was as practical as it was symbolic. Underneath all the praise of character and patriotism, however, was the continued desire for land.

Praise for the frontiersman followed Polk's discussion of land acquisition, which indicated that the legendary status of the frontiersman was directly correlated with land acquisition. Smith stated that the promoters of expansion characterized the integrity of the nation that coincided with conquest.[163] Slotkin has argued that this myth created a need to ensure that this virtue of the nation had to be protected through violence.[164] Much like his own grandfather, Polk spoke of maintaining the claim of conquest over the land. Polk's speeches embodied aggression in order that the attitude of the nation as a whole reflected the belligerence of the frontiersman. The aggression characterized in Polk's speech at the end of 1845 would be the manner in which he approached his foreign policy throughout 1846.

Instead of the mere employment of aggressive rhetoric, Polk took action by setting his plans of conquest in motion through any means he considered necessary. The president's rhetoric of protection for the nation gave way to his true ambition of land acquisition, but all the while Polk maintained the facade of the frontier legacy. Early 1846 observed yet another change in the Mexican government. General Mariano Parades was inducted as the Mexican president on January 1, 1846, after yet another coup.[165]

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[163] Smith, *Virgin Land*, 185.

[164] Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence*, 281.

[165] Greenburg, *A Wicked War, 89.*

Despite the change in government, Mexican statesmen continued their refusal to meet with Slidell. By April, it was clear that Slidell would not to be able to negotiate with the Mexican government and the diplomat returned to the United States.[166]

With negotiations with Mexico at a standstill, Polk began work on settling the issue of Oregon by negotiating with the British. Though Polk stated that he was ready to fight for Oregon if necessary, the president remained determined to negotiate, hence, negotiations with the British slowly continued. Finally, in early April, 1846, the British and U.S. governments signed a preliminary agreement to end joint occupation and position the border at the 49th parallel. The agreement would still have to be modified and agreed to by the British parliament before the United States could receive full custody of Oregon.[167] With the Oregon Territory problem alleviated for the moment, Polk had the energy to invest in a war with Mexico.

Polk's facade of the frontier legacy was the camouflage for his imperial ambitions already commenced by ordering troops to Texas to protect the disputed land between the Nueces River and the Rio Grande. Though officially Polk had stated that General Taylor's presence in Texas was for the protection of settlers, the movements were in fact war preparations initiated by the president.[168] In March of 1846, Polk ordered Taylor to

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[166] James K. Polk, April 10, 1846, diary entry, in *The Diary of James K. Polk During his Presidency*, *1845 to 1849*, vol. 1, ed. Milo Milton Quaife, 324-325.

[167] James K. Polk, April 24, 1846, diary entry, in *The Diary of James K. Polk During his Presidency*, *1845 to 1849*, vol. 1, ed. Milo Milton Quaife, 344-345.

[168] Greenburg, *A Wicked War, 76-77.*

guard the disputed land between the Nueces River and the Rio Grande.[169] Skirmishes on the border with Mexico broke out in the last week of April and no sooner did the news reach Polk than he composed a Declaration of War against Mexico to present to Congress.[170] On May 13, 1846, Congress approved this declaration against Mexico rendering the war official.[171] Polk's military maneuvering had succeeded in provoking war and his dreams of expanding the nation across the continent could finally come to fruition.

As soon as war was declared, Polk inflated his original plans of expansion and told his cabinet of the plans he had already initiated beneath the disguise of his frontier rhetoric. The frontier and the protection of the frontiersman were the critical points emphasized by Polk to the public and even to his cabinet. Polk surprised even Secretary of State James Buchanan when he declared that the objective was to invade the northern Mexican states, known today as the Southwest.[172] Polk did not fully divulge his plans of expansion to even his closest advisors. As he later stated in his diary, Polk had been trying to persuade the Mexican government to sell him these territories but because they would not sell the territories, the United States would obtain them through war,

> I declared my purpose to be to acquire for the U.S., California, New Mexico, and perhaps some others of the Northern Provinces of Mexico whenever a peace was made. In Mr. Slidell's secret instructions last

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[169] James K. Polk, May 5, 1846, diary entry, in *The Diary of James K. Polk During his Presidency*, *1845 to 1849*, vol. 1, ed. Milo Milton Quaife, 375-376.

[170] Greenburg, *A Wicked War,* 103.

[171] Sellers, *James K. Polk, Continentalist, 1843-1846*, 417.

[172] James K. Polk, May 13, 1846, diary entry, in *The Diary of James K. Polk During his Presidency*, *1845 to 1849*, vol. 1, 395-396.

> autumn these objects were included. Now that we were at war the prospect of acquiring them was much better…[173]

While Polk cited the protection of the nation and devotion to the frontiersman, he was planning to take over the majority of the continent. His rhetoric served as a mask allowing Polk to implement his plans of conquest. However, the president could not simply explain these plans to all and sundry and even stopped Buchanan from sending a declaration of intention to the major European powers.[174] The heroic image of the war that Polk tried to promote needed to be kept alive in order to maintain support for the war. To do this, Polk continued to endorse the frontiersman and the brave character of the nation.

The frontiersmen as a symbol of American character proved to be a particularly effective tool that Polk continued to use in order to evoke a sense of heroism as the war began. Upon the outbreak of war thousands of volunteers flocked to join.[175] The summer of 1846 exposed, however, how unprepared the nation truly was for war. Though the navy had begun a blockade of Mexico's eastern coastline, the army struggled to push Mexican forces back across the Rio Grande with such a small standing army. Additionally, the volunteer forces had not been sufficiently trained to be able to join the fighting.[176] The pace of the war seemed to be the opposite of that which Polk had promised. Luckily for Polk, the British had finally come to an agreement with the United

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[173] James K. Polk, May 30, 1846, diary entry, in *The Diary of James K. Polk During his Presidency*, *1845 to 1849*, vol. 1, 438.

[174] James K. Polk, May 13, 1846, diary entry, ibid., 395.

[175] James K. Polk, May 15, 1846, diary entry, ibid,, 401.

[176] Haynes, *James K. Polk and the Expansionist Impulse*, 140-142.

States and the Oregon Treaty up to the 49th parallel was finalized on June 15, 1846.[177] Despite this small victory for Polk, the U.S. Army continued to face heavy Mexican resistance threatening Polk's vision of complete victory.

During the invasion of Mexico, south of the Rio Grande, the American army began to encounter a number of problems that threatened support for the war as the soldiers trekked across the Mexican desert. Harsh climates in the Chihuahua and Sonora Deserts in the middle of summer were difficult enough without disease also crippling the American army.[178] The end of summer only weakened the Americans further as General Santa Anna returned from exile to help fight the United States. Santa Anna was a highly capable military leader and proved to be a much more formidable leader than President Paredes's previous appointees.[179] In addition, the frontiersmen that Polk had praised for their combat skills were not as infallible as he had argued. In fact many field generals regarded the volunteers from the border states and new territories as some of the worst fighters during the war.[180] Despite not living up to the physical prowess of the legendary frontiersmen, volunteers still embraced the cultural values this legend promoted. American soldiers in Mexico came to embrace the concept of martial manhood that Polk promoted in his rhetoric, but adopting this ideology also meant addressing its negative side as well.

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[177] W. Stull Holt, *Treaties Defeated by the Senate: A Study of Struggle Between President and Senate Over the Conduct of Foreign Relations*, (Union: The Lawbook Exchange Limited, 2000), 86.

[178] Greenberg, *A Wicked War*, 131.

[179] Haynes, *James K. Polk and the Expansionist Impulse*, 148-149.

[180] Thomas Cruse, "Remarks Upon a Popular Fallacy Concerning Mexico and her Military Resources," *Journal of the United States Cavalry Association* V, no. 17, (June 1892), 125-127.

Summarily, violent masculinity compelled soldiers to commit atrocities. In early October, General Taylor was disheartened as he witnessed these actions in the capture of Monterrey by men so highly respected, namely the Texas Rangers, "I regret to report that some shameful atrocities have been perpetrated by them [the Texas Rangers] since the capitulation of the town."[181] Rape, beatings, and pillaging spread beyond the volunteer soldiers into the larger body of the army until the commanding officers could no longer control their men.[182] The Texans who Polk had personally praised for their bravery and patriotic nature, in fact, committed violent acts against a civilian population. These men who were actually frontiersmen had been glorified as heroes before the war.[183] Yet this was the reality of martial manhood; violence against an inferior race was behavior associated with war, therefore, it was tolerated just as violence had been tolerated in wars against the Native American tribes.[184] As conditions worsened, however, many began to question Polk's ability as leader along with the war itself. The president's method of managing this criticism was to continue to emphasize the frontier legacy that the war represented.

Accordingly, in his Second Annual Message, the president confronted his critics and assured the nation that the cause was still as just as it had been since the beginning.

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[181] Zachary Taylor to Adjunct of the General of the Army, Matamoros, 6 October, 1846, letter, House Executive Documents, 60, 30th Congress, First Session, 430 quoted in Brian DeLay, *War of A Thousand Deserts: Indian Raids and the U.S.-Mexican War*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 280.

[182] DeLay, *War of A Thousand Deserts,* 181.

[183] Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment*, 163.

[184] Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood*, 22

As in his pre-war speeches, Polk focused on the bravery of the men who continued to fight for the frontier spirit.

> The war has been represented as unjust and unnecessary and as one of aggression on our part upon a weak and injured enemy…It is a source of national pride and exultation that the great body of our people have thrown no such obstacles in the way of the Government in prosecuting the war successfully, but have shown themselves to be eminently patriotic and ready to vindicate their country's honor and interests at any sacrifice. The alacrity and promptness with which our volunteer forces rushed to the field on their country's call prove not only their patriotism, but their deep conviction that our cause is just.[185]

Rather than hide behind the authority of his position, Polk directly addressed the concerns raised by the imperialistic actions of his administration. Reminiscent of Jackson, Polk used his position to both dismiss his critics and stimulate loyalty for the war effort in Mexico. Polk then equated skepticism toward the war with anti-patriotic sentiment. Correspondingly, the president associated willingness to engage in war with patriotism. This created a correlation between aggression and patriotism, which Polk had promoted since his presidential campaign. It also defined the aggressive actions of American imperialism as paradigms of manly character, thereby, correlating conquest with the expression of masculinity. Polk further developed this statement by describing the fight with Mexico for Texas as a just cause. Polk stated that the U.S. government had attempted every possible form of negotiation to avoid war with Mexico but the Mexican Republic had not been receptive to the American diplomats, thus war had proved inevitable.

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[185] James K. Polk, "Second Annual Message," (speech, Washington D.C., December 8, 1846), The American Presidency Project, University of California Santa Barbara, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=29487.

Polk then transferred his rhetoric from U.S. innocence in the war's beginning to that of conquest. This change in tone symbolized the discrepancy between the rhetoric he disseminated to the public and the ambition behind it. He shifted from the initial declaration that, "The United States never attempted to acquire Texas by conquest," to stating that the army had successfully deposed the Mexican government in California.[186] Accordingly, Polk's rhetorical facade began to dissipate in his 1846 speech. An example of this was Polk's addressing of the military success in the campaign. The highlight of his speech concerned the acquisition of land in Southwest and Northern Mexico, which had not featured in the initial objectives of the war.

> The old civil government being necessarily superseded, it is the right and duty of the conqueror to secure this conquest and to provide for the maintenance of civil order and the rights of the inhabitants. This right has been exercised and this duty performed by our military and naval commanders by the establishment of temporary governments in some of the conquered Provinces of Mexico, assimilating them as far as practicable to the free institutions of our own country… It may be proper to provide for the security of these important conquests by making an adequate appropriation for the purpose of erecting fortifications and defraying the expenses necessarily incident to the maintenance of our possession and authority over them.[187]

Though the president stated that the government had established temporary governments in the occupied territories, he also declared that these institutions were being assimilated into the U.S. system. Consequently, even though there was no intention of taking control of these Mexican states the army had already begun to integrate U.S. institutions into what were even being referred to as conquests. Polk completed this deliberation by

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[186] Ibid.

[187] James K. Polk, "Second Annual Message."

announcing that the military would make structural changes to in order to maintain both possession and authority over the former Mexican states.[188] Despite the president's claim that the U.S. was not a conquering force, he praised the conquest of the Mexican territories and even asked Congress to appropriate money for the settlement of Alta California. Polk's settlement also spoke to the innate racial and power structures constitutive of American imperialism.

Following conquest, Polk immediately sought to begin the process of assimilation through the implementation of American institutions. Slotkin argued that conquest consisted of two principal steps: the removal of the previous power and the insertion of American values.[189] The conquest of Alta California had already been completed when Polk delivered his speech arguing for the implementation of the second part of this plan, that is, the concretion of U.S. rule. In this system, the Mexican people became subordinate and dependent in a similar manner to the Native Americans on reservations. Their culture was also eradicated through these institutions by erasing the allegedly inferior Mexican culture and replacing it with the superior American one. This dependency was evident at the end of the war during peace negotiations but on a larger scale. Until that time the assimilation of the captured territories into the American way of life continued to develop.

Throughout 1847, the difficulties of the war tested the power of Polk's frontiersman rhetoric. In addition to widespread disease, lack of supplies, and the general

[188] Ibid.

[189] Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment*, 230-232.

weariness of the soldiers, the American army also had to contend with Santa Anna marching against them in early 1847. Taylor ordered a landing at Veracruz and for his army, comprised of mostly volunteers, to move south closer toward Santa Anna's forces.[190] The American troops under Taylor continued to struggle through Mexico's heartland, encountering more opposition from the elements than the Mexican soldiers. The troops continued to resist the Mexican Army in key battles such as the Battle of Buena Vista in February and the Siege of Veracruz in March.[191] The capture of Veracruz by General Scott's troops proved to be the beginning of the end of the war. Beginning on April 8, 1847, Scott marched from Veracruz inland toward Mexico City.[192] The difficulty with continuing the advance toward Mexico City, however, was that many of the soldiers had a limited service time that would end by the spring.[193] Between the number of soldiers at the end of their enlistment and those who died of disease, the U.S. Army needed to recover its forces before continuing on to the capital. The delay gave President Polk the chance to send an envoy to negotiate for Mexico's surrender and test the limits of his imperial ambition.

As the war neared its end, the frontier legacy that Polk had used as a mask finally disintegrated and the true nature of his imperial ambition became more apparent. The

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[190] Greenburg, *A Wicked War, 153.*

[191] Ibid., 160, 171.

[192] Pinheiro, *Manifest Ambition*, 31.

[193] Ibid. "Report of Honorable A. H. Coffroth on the Bill Granting Pensions to Certain Soldiers and Sailors of the Mexican and Other Wars," January, 19, 1880, in *The Vedette*, in *Vedette Collection*, vol. 1, (Washington D.C.: Vedette, 1880), 7. Volunteers of the U.S.-Mexican War could sign up for three, six, or twelve months. Nearly 40% of the men who enlisted as volunteers had these short term enlistments. Only a third of the aforementioned percentage re-enlisted. That still resulted in around 15% who left after a short service. Additionally, over 10,000 men died of disease over the course of the war.

cultural motifs that Polk had inserted in his rhetoric in order to create the legacy of the frontiersman, however, lived on in the surrender. In May, Polk sent Nicholas Trist to offer terms of peace to the Mexican government.[194] Trist's mission was to secure the entirety of Alta California, Texas, New Mexico, and also if he could, Baja California.[195] During the summer of 1847, Trist consistently tried to reach an agreement with the Mexican government on the terms of surrender but to no avail. Polk maintained his forces at the ready to attack the Mexican capital should Trist fail in his mission and strategized the best method of doing so with Generals Scott and Pierce.[196] By early September, negotiations had not progressed with the Mexican government and Polk approved the siege of Mexico City.[197] The bloody conclusion to this war forced Mexico to surrender to the United States, allowing much of Polk's imperial ambition to be satisfied.

The conquest of Mexico City reflected the pattern of frontier violence embedded in the U.S. history of expansion. The U.S. presence in Mexico City reflected the violence, racism, and ideas of masculinity that had been incorporated into territorial greed. Scott's soldiers marched effectively against the weary Mexican Army and the army quickly unraveled. On September 13, Chapultepec Castle fell effectively destroying Santa Anna's

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[194] James K. Polk, June 15, 1847, diary entry, in *The Diary of James K. Polk During his Presidency*, *1845 to 1849*, vol. III, ed. Milo Milton Quaife, Chicago: A. C. McClurg and Company, 1910, 63.

[195] James K. Polk, April 14, 1847, diary entry, in *The Diary of James K. Polk During his Presidency*, *1845 to 1849*, vol. II, ed. Milo Milton Quaife, Chicago: A. C. McClurg and Company, 1910, 473-474.

[196] James K. Polk, August 14, 1847, diary entry, in *The Diary of James K. Polk During his Presidency*, *1845 to 1849*, vol. III, 118.

[197] Ibid., 167-168.

army and the following day Scott marched his troops into Mexico City.[198] Once again rape, looting, and pillaging were all common occurrences during the U.S. occupation of the city.[199] The violence that had been pervasive throughout the war continued even after the victory over the Mexican Army. Soldiers committed violent acts in Mexico City in much the same way that soldiers had expressed violence toward Native Americans in years past.[200] This treatment reflected a gendered notion that Greenberg describes as a violent masculine American presence versus the weaker feminine characteristics of the native Mexican population.[201] These notions of racial and masculine superiority resulted in atrocities being committed by the American soldiers and, again, these atrocities were ignored by American officers during the occupation. The conquest of Mexico itself was only the beginning of the imperialist legacy for the treaty signed at the conclusion of the war embedded the realities of race, masculinity, and violence into national policy.

The tumultuous negotiations at the end of the war created an environment in which the Mexican people were subject to the conquering force of the United States. With the Mexican governing body essentially held hostage by U.S. forces, Polk sent Trist once again to negotiate. This time, however, Trist did not follow Polk's instructions to negotiate for as much land as possible but instead negotiated his own terms thereby securing the modern Southwestern states.[202] Trist refused to return to the United States

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[198] Greenberg, *A Wicked War*, 210

[199] Pinheiro, *Manifest Ambition*, 31-32.

[200] Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment*, 181.

[201] Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood*, 26.

[202] James K. Polk, December 28, 1847, diary entry, in *The Diary of James K. Polk During his Presidency*, *1845 to 1849*, vol. III, 263.

when Polk recalled him until he had negotiated what he considered to be a reasonable treaty with Mexico. The result was the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which was signed on February 2, 1848. In spite of Polk's desire to obtain more land, the body of the treaty was filled with the cultural legacies of the frontier, which became a permanent part of the structure of the American empire of the nineteenth century.

Accordingly, the deep-rooted principles of frontier life, which Polk had internalized, continued to be the attitude of conquest through the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Racial, masculine, and Christian attitudes that existed as part of Polk's frontier legacy became law effectively placing Mexicans in the role of conquered natives. In this way, the legacy of the frontier endured but the treaty also became the first example of the frontier legacy in an imperial pursuit. This treaty not only granted Polk the land for which he had been vying since his nomination but it also incorporated those Mexican citizens who wished to remain in the Southwest and promised a path to citizenship.[203]

This aspect was significant because it transferred the nation from the idea of expansionism to that of imperialism, seeking to incorporate other peoples through conquest rather than simply removing them from their land. Article VIII stated that until the Mexican citizens could be incorporated as U.S. citizens they would live under the protection of the U.S.[204] This attitude mirrored the racial paternalism used to subjugate African slaves and Native Americans as described by Slotkin.[205] According to the logic

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[203] "Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo" February 2, 1848, art. VIII, The Avalon Project, Lillian Goldman Law Library, Yale University, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/guadhida.asp.

[204] Ibid.

[205] Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment*, 236-237.

of the treaty, the supposed racial inferiority of the Mexican people meant they needed the Anglo-Americans to guide them toward civilization. It was, therefore, nothing less than the Christian duty of the United States to assist these people in becoming civilized.[206] The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo directs these attitudes of subjugation toward nations with already recognized governments, thereby conveying the frontier ideas of conquest into an imperialistic setting. At the core of the frontier attitude was first and foremost the acquisition of land.

Despite the rhetoric of incorporation and protection, the goal of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was to provide as much land for Anglo-American settlers as possible. Though Articles VIII and IX allowed Mexicans to keep the titles to their land, the subsequent exclusion of Article X nullified the power of these arguments.[207] Article X stated that all land rights granted before Mexican Independence in 1821 would be respected. However, the U.S. Congress omitted Article X upon ratification of the treaty after the Mexican government had already signed the treaty with Article X included.[208] This meant that the vast majority of Mexican land claims in the Southwest were, in fact, subject to seizure and many of the claims were removed from the original owners. Much like the seizure of Cherokee land during Polk's childhood, and most encounters with Native Americans, treaties did not stop Americans from acquiring land through conquest. Yet, Polk could not allow the American public to witness the realities of conquest.

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[206] Ibid., 234.

[207] "Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo" February 2, 1848, art. VIII and IV, The Avalon Project, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/guadhida.asp.

[208] Jason Porterfield, *The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, 1848, A Primary Source Examination of the Treaty that Ended the Mexican American War*, (New York: Rosen Publishing Group, 2006), 48.

Instead, he decided to end his presidency in much the same way he had entered office, by glorifying the frontiersman and the American character.

In his final annual address, Polk depicted the war as the ultimate testament to the nation's integrity while concealing the ugly realities of imperial conquest. As he reviewed the progress of the nation over the preceding year, Polk reinforced the connection between the victories in Mexico and the frontiersman.

> Our citizen soldiers are unlike those of any other country in other respects. They are armed, and have been accustomed from their youth up to handle and use firearms, and a large proportion of them, especially in the Western and more newly settled States, are expert marksmen. They are men who have a reputation to maintain at home by their good conduct in the field. They are intelligent, and there is an individuality of character which is found in the ranks of no other army.[209]

Polk attributed the battlefield prowess of American soldiers to their knowledge of firearms especially those who had grown up on the frontier. In this case, the president argued, the ability to conquer comes from the character built on the frontier, which is a uniquely American trait. The conquest of Mexico was, therefore, merely an expression of their character and fortitude endorsing the idea of martial manhood.[210] However, the president chose to ignore the darker side of the aggressive masculinity that he praised. The president noted the soldiers' intelligence and high moral standards supposedly indicative of the racial superiority of the American male. He did this knowing full well the atrocities committed mostly by volunteers. To Polk, legacy was greater than truth;

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[209] James K. Polk, "Fourth Annual Message," (speech, Washington D.C., December 5, 1848), The American Presidency Project, University of California Santa Barbara, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=29489.

[210] Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood*, 12.

that was the case with his grandfather and with Jackson. Above all else, Polk protected the legacy of the frontiersman. Yet, despite the president praising the frontiersman he did not shy away from informing the American people of the spoils of war ranging from the valuable land acquired during Polk's presidency to resources now available to Americans.

In describing the benefits of acquiring California, Polk revealed that hidden behind his praise of the American people was the ambition for empire. California proved to be a source of the profit that Polk desired, "It was known that mines of the precious metals existed to a considerable extent in California at the time of its acquisition. Recent discoveries render it probable that these mines are more extensive and valuable than was anticipated."[211] Not only was the value of California recognized, it was seized upon by American forces as part of this war of conquest. The protection of Texas had nothing to do with the minerals found in California but Polk would still include the benefits of conquest in this speech.

Polk drew his discussion of the war to a close by emphasizing the importance of the frontier to the development and character of the nation. The president summarized the benefits of conquest as follows: "The whole people of the United States, and of every State, contributed to defray the expenses of that war, and it would not be just for any one section to exclude another from all participation in the acquired territory. This would not be in consonance with the just system of government which the framers of the

[211] James K. Polk, "Fourth Annual Message," The American Presidency Project.

Constitution adopted."[212] In Polk's mind the frontier had not only created the soldiers who led the nation to victory but also opened up the territory for further settlement. It was the continuous frontier that defined America. He believed that war perpetuated the cycle of the frontier by opening up the new continental frontier to the American people, particularly the soldiers who fought for the nation's glory. The mission of conquest then became a method of perpetuating the advancement of the nation. Polk's frontier message may have concealed other motivations but he consistently returned to the myth that the frontier made the man.

Though the president did finally achieve the goals that he had intended to accomplish, his efforts took a severe toll on his health. After an eventful one-term presidency, Polk did not live to see the change in the nation that resulted from his war of imperialism; he died less than a year after the conclusion of the war.[213] Ultimately, Polk's ambitions and successes in the U.S.-Mexican War shaped the development of the nation and created an empire of successive frontiers that continued on well past his lifetime.

[212] Ibid.

[213] Greenburg, *A Wicked War, 268.*

Chapter 2: Jefferson Davis

Though he is most frequently remembered for being the president of the Confederacy, Jefferson Davis began his life on the frontier with his family. He lived the kind of life that is described in the frontier myth and observed the cultural concepts such as racism, masculinity, and physical strength associated with the South. However, it was not until his career as a military officer on the frontier that these motifs truly began to shape his ideology. As a soldier, Davis was an enforcer of the frontier myth and a defender of pioneer settlement fighting against Native Americans for the benefit of his nation. Davis carried these experiences with him when he returned to civilian life and became a plantation owner. Davis's life as a wealthy Southern man further transformed his ideas about expansion by incorporating Southern economic interests into his ideology. Subsequently, as a statesman, Davis used his own background to promote the frontier myth. Davis painted a picture of heroism based on his own image to create a national symbol of racial and male superiority. It was this heroic image that provided a shield for the ambition that was truly behind one of the largest wars of American expansion: the U.S.-Mexican War.

Davis's interests in expansion lay in its economic benefit to the South. Yet, in his rhetoric, Davis promoted the U.S.-Mexican War and the Oregon conflict as battles over territory already settled by American pioneers. For Davis, entering these conflicts meant defending the American way of life. Additionally, he revealed the political division between the North and South throughout the 1840s in his rhetoric, which was laden with the cultural motifs of Southern slaveholders. This viewpoint included an emphasis on

masculinity, morality, racism, and violence. Even after the U.S.-Mexican War, Davis argued for the expansion of the United States into new territories, using the frontier myth to make his case. Davis acted as a proponent of U.S. expansion for the rest of his life, eventually even going to war to defend his Southern ideals. The world he helped to create shaped the nation and created a new American empire. His legacy demonstrated that the larger cultural motifs associated with the frontier myth exceeded any one war of imperialism; together they formed a cultural system that continued to shape various leaders throughout the nineteenth century.

The connection between the frontier and the Davis family preceded the birth of Jefferson Davis. This future soldier came from generations of pioneers. Evan Davis Sr., Jefferson Davis's great-grandfather, was born to Welsh immigrants and was a settler in colonial Pennsylvania.[214] His grandfather, Evan Davis Jr., was a settler in colonial Georgia in 1754, which was then a gateway to the Appalachian Mountains and a lucrative timber supply.[215] The future Confederate President's father, Samuel Davis, fought in the Revolutionary War as a privateer.[216] After the war, Samuel Davis became a pioneer of Kentucky who helped to establish the Baptist community of Fairview and it was in this small community on the frontier that Davis was born in 1808. [217] Samuel Davis sought to

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[214] William J. Cooper, Jr., *Jefferson Davis, American*, (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 2000), 9-10.

[215] Ibid., 10.

[216] Ibid.

[217] Felicity Allen, *Jefferson Davis: Unconquerable Heart*, (Colombia: University of Missouri Press, 1999), 33-34. "Chart Four: Third and Forth Generations," appendix, in *The Papers of Jefferson Davis*, ed. Haskell M. Monroe Jr. and James T. McIntoch, Vol. 1, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971), 514.

create a new life for his family by purchasing a few slaves to help cultivate their fields.[218] Though the Davis family was deeply devoted to their religion and their community, Samuel Davis moved them from the area after the local Baptist preachers denounced slavery.[219] This time the family moved to Louisiana for a brief period before continuing their journey in 1811 to Wilkinson County, Mississippi.[220] This is where the family settled and Davis spent his childhood. In these formative years, his experiences on the frontier developed his beliefs about masculinity, race, and gender.

One of the key cultural concepts that Davis learned in his childhood, later reflected in his rhetoric, was the idea of masculinity that he had learned from his father. Davis formulated concepts of what it meant to be a frontiersman and how gender featured in that role. Samuel Davis was a hardworking man who remained in good physical condition even in his old age.[221] Davis remembered his father as a stern man who was aggressive if his authority in the house was not respected. One instance that Davis recalled was his father shouting at Davis for questioning why his parents ate a different dinner than the children.[222] Though he was a stern man, Samuel Davis was also a man of deep religious convictions, as was his wife, which were imparted to their children raising them to lead strictly disciplined Christian lives. The family attended church service every

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[218] Ibid., 36.

[219] Cooper, Jr., *Jefferson Davis, American*, 13.

[220] William Heth Whitsitt, *Genealogy of Jefferson Davis: Address Delivered October 9, 1909, Before Lee Camp, No. 1, Confederate Veterans, Richmond*, Va., (Richmond: Everett Waddy Company, 1909), 15

[221] Cooper, Jr., *Jefferson Davis, American*, 14-15.

[222] William C. Davis, Jefferson Davis, *The Man and his Hour*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1991), 9.

Sunday and the children received a biblical education before they began formal schooling.[223] Samuel Davis tried to impart his religious devotion to his sons. This sense of authority, a hard-working nature, and religious devotion were what Davis portrayed as his example of a man. Samuel Davis exemplified Greenberg's idea of martial manhood as he exerted his power as head of the household while still respecting his religious convictions.[224] Slotkin also regarded the frontiersman as a physically powerful figure and one who relied on his religious convictions to help him face the frontier.[225] However, because Samuel Davis was nearly fifty when Jefferson Davis was born, Davis also had his older brothers to serve as examples of masculinity.

Davis's older brothers – Joseph, Isaac, and Samuel Jr., – combined the image of the frontiersman, similarly to that of their father, with the soldier. Joseph and Samuel Jr. joined the army following the Fort Mims massacre on August 30, 1813. On this day a group of Creek Indians, called the Red Sticks, attacked the fort killing soldiers and non-combatants.[226] The brothers were part of the Mississippi cavalry that fought under Major Thomas Hinds. Davis recalled seeing them in their pressed uniforms and shining swords which made them look heroic to the young Davis.[227] His brothers also fought the

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[223] Allen, *Jefferson Davis: Unconquerable Heart*, 36.

[224] Amy Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum American Empire*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 12-13.

[225] Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier 1600-1860*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1973), 22.

[226] Eron Rowland, *Mississippi Territory in the War of 1812*, vol. 4, (Jackson: Mississippi Historical Society, 1921), 43-44, 158.

[227] Jefferson Davis to William Brown, 7 May 1853, letter, in *Jefferson Davis the Essential Writings*, ed. William J. Cooper Jr., (New York: The Modern Library, 2003), 103-104.

Choctaws in Mobile and then helped to push the British out of Pensacola, Florida.[228] Jefferson's brothers represented Greenberg's generation of martial virtue, men who used war to prove masculinity, which began with the War of 1812.[229] Slotkin also regarded the frontiersman turned soldier as the foundation for aggression within the frontier myth. Accordingly, the conflict between Native Americans and the frontiersman not only racialized warfare but it also celebrated the violence that the soldier embodied.[230] Davis would follow the path of his brothers when he joined the army later as a young man.

Frontier life for the Davis family was not glamorous. The Davis family was relatively poor, requiring the labor of the entire family to survive.[231] Jefferson Davis was one of seven children in his household, which meant resources were scarce.[232] The family was, however, able to advance their socioeconomic status through slavery. Once they had established themselves in Mississippi in 1817, they purchased more slaves in order to help with the work on the family's farm.[233] The family's fortunes then rose over the next twenty years conveying the Davis family into the aristocratic planter class through a lucrative slave-run cotton farm.[234] Exposure to the extreme racism attributed to slavery in Davis's developmental years inured him to human bondage. Plantation culture imbued Davis with a sense of superiority stemming from the privileges associated with wealth.

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[228] *Mississippi Territory in the War of 1812*, vol. 4, 100-101.

[229] Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood*, 26.

[230] Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence*, 23.

[231] Cooper Jr., *Jefferson -Davis: American*, 14.

[232] Though the Davis family had ten children three had already moved out of the house by 1817.

[233] Ibid.

[234] Ibid., 14-15.

Slavery provided the means for the continual accumulation of wealth. Black slaves were viewed as even less than racially inferior; rather they were tools, almost inhuman.[235] Slotkin argued that slavery was based on a racial ideology that placed Anglo-Saxons above all other races. This sentiment justified the subjugation and violence in the treatment of slaves.[236] In addition, the slave-holding South was a patriarchal system meaning that the men of these wealthy families dominated not only their slaves, but also the women of their households. Their position of power gave Southern men a sense of superiority that became embedded in Southern culture.[237] As part of this power, Davis developed a sense of masculine superiority that manifested itself as he became a young man and left his home for the first time.

Around the time that Jefferson Davis entered university, the ideology he had learned both in his life on the frontier and as a wealthy planter's son began to reveal itself within his personality. Wealth allowed Davis to become a highly educated young man. He attended both Jefferson College and Transylvania University.[238] According to William Dodd, upon entering Transylvania University, Davis did not want to associate with students who were smaller or physically weaker than he, claiming that to do so would weaken his status.[239] The ideas of the physicality associated with masculinity seem

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[235] George Fredrickson, *The Arrogance of Race; Historical Perspectives on Slavery, Racism, and Social Inquiry*, (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1988), 24.

[236] Richard Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment: The Myth of the Frontier in the Age of Industrialization, 1800-1890*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985), 230-231.

[237] Charity R. Carney, *Ministers and Masters*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press), 39.

[238] William E. Dodd, *Jefferson Davis*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1907), 19.

[239] Ibid., 20.

to have affected Davis' personality and his social behavior. Physicality and a sense of superiority were ever present in Davis's life. They were not simply concepts that accompanied his ideas of the frontier, rather they were part of his character. Consequently, these ideas of masculinity, race, and American conquest only developed further as Jefferson Davis moved from academic education to military life.

The cultural motifs that Davis learned as a boy became apparent as the young man entered a world in which he was an actor on the frontier and not merely an observer. The death of Davis's father, Samuel E. Davis, made the Mississippian's eldest brother Joseph the patriarch of the Davis family.[240] Joseph saw the potential that Jefferson presented with his high scholastic achievement but thought that the academic environment was not suitable for his youngest brother. Joseph arranged for Jefferson to attend the United States Military Academy at West Point to enter a military career like his grandfather and father.[241] Initially, the staff thought Jefferson Davis would have a promising career as an officer; however, it soon became apparent that the behavioral issues that Davis had displayed in his early years had followed him into his time as a cadet.

Ideas of martial masculinity became characteristic of the young man's personality and caused him to view anyone who did not embody masculinity as inferior. For this reason, Davis had fraught relationships with authority figures. Not only was he known for causing general mischief during his time at the academy, he continued to carry with him the sense of superiority that he had displayed at Transylvania College, particularly toward

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[240] Cooper Jr., *Jefferson Davis: American*, 26-27.

[241] Jefferson Davis to Susannah Gartley Davis, 2 August, 1824, in *The Papers of Jefferson Davis*, Vol. 1, 11.

cadets from New England. In a letter to his brother Joseph, Davis wrote about this division between himself and his classmates,

> The Yankee part of the corps find their pay sufficient some even more, but these are not such as I formed an acquaintance with on my arrival…nor are they such associates as I would [illegible] at the present select, enough of this as you have never been connected with them, you cannot know how pitiful they generally are.[242]

Davis was referring to the stipend received by cadets and the rule that cadets were not allowed to receive support money from parents or guardians.[243] The letter indicated that Davis not only retained the sense of superiority that he had developed as a young boy, but that this attitude became focused on Northerners, the enemies of the Southern culture in which Davis had grown up. He thought the New Englanders had weak characters and believed that they could not live without the luxuries of a wealthy lifestyle.

The distaste that Davis felt was an example of Greenberg's definition of martial manhood, that is, a form of masculinity, pervasive in the South, which celebrated physical strength and strength of character.[244] Jefferson Davis regarded his classmates as pathetic – not the masculine characters who had braved the dangers of the wilderness or struggled to survive. He despised the classmates who merely wanted to receive support money from their parents to live comfortably at the academy rather than embrace the idea of living off the supplies provided by the military. It was a simpler lifestyle than many of the cadets of wealthy families were used to but it was an institutionalized existence meant

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[242] Jefferson Davis to Joseph Davis, 12 January, 1825, in *The Papers of Jefferson Davis*, Vol. 1, 18.

[243] Cooper Jr., *Jefferson Davis: American, 28.*

[244] Greenburg, *Manifest Manhood,* 12-13.

to mold the young men into proper military men. By accepting extra money the New England cadets were simply continuing to live a comfortable lifestyle according to Davis. From this point on in Davis' life these ideas of acceptable manhood became associated with regional politics. As Davis transitioned from cadet to soldier, he would experience the conflict between native peoples and white settlers at the frontier. He carried these ideas of strength and masculinity to the frontier with him where he faced racial conflict.

Davis graduated as a second lieutenant and was assigned to the Infantry Sixth Regiment to complete his basic training.[245] Once Davis completed his training, he was assigned to the edge of the American settlement near Fort Crawford, in Wisconsin.[246] Shortly after this, Davis was sent to Fort Winnebago in 1829.[247] It was during his time as a soldier that Davis' perceptions of masculinity, violence, and imperialism hardened into the experiences that would shape his world and political views.

Jefferson Davis's interactions as a soldier with Native American tribes shaped his view of Indigenous peoples and the frontier. As a soldier, Davis perceived these people as a threat to the settlers who he was assigned to protect. In the winter of 1829, Davis was again reassigned, this time to the First Infantry Division stationed at Fort Howard to protect the settlements near Green Bay in present day Wisconsin.[248] It was here that Davis would witness the effects of American expansionism firsthand. Furthermore, the

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[245] P.B. Porter of the Adjunct General's Office, "Order: Promotions and Appointments," in *The Papers of Jefferson Davis*, Vol. 1, 111.

[246] Adjunct General's Office, "Post Return," 31 March, 1829, in *The Papers of Jefferson Davis*, Vol. 1, 116.

[247] Adjunct General's Office, "Post Return," 31 May, 1829, in *The Papers of Jefferson Davis*, Vol. 1, 118.

[248] Cooper Jr., *Jefferson Davis: American, 43-44.*

interactions Davis had with the settlers and Native Americans in this area affected his ideas about the West as well as American masculinity. Davis and his squadron were sent to protect the newly built lumber mills from attacks by Ojibwe, most likely the Sukogonong Ojibwe.[249] These conflicts with Native Americans continued to impact Davis's conceptions of racism.

Slotkin described the frontier myth as characterizing Native Americans as a threat to order and peace on the frontier.[250] Davis's role at Fort Winnebago was to ensure that this threat did not arise, however, Davis's first negative encounter with the Ojibwe was only a small conflict. Davis and his troop were on a reconnaissance mission near Fort Winnebago when they encountered a group of Indigenous men. The Native Americans attempted to block Davis's troop from continuing on their mission. Instead of allowing that to happen, Davis himself charged the leader of the group and grabbed the man's hair while remaining on his horse. The other men allowed Davis and his men to pass after this display.[251] In this way, Davis's presence at the frontier forced him to come face to face with the issue of race.

As a soldier during the Black Hawk War, Davis both observed and enforced racism. This was one of the first major events in which Davis had to evaluate his role in the racially divided landscape. In 1832, Black Hawk had already been an enemy of the

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[249] Ibid., *44., Atlas of Great Lakes Indian History*, ed. Helen Hornbeck Tanner, Adele Hast, Jacqueline Peterson, Robert J. Surtees, Miklos Pinther, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 134, 144. Historical records label the tribes in this area as Chippewa which was the old Anglicized version of Ojibwe that is the standard usage today.

[250] Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment*, 53.

[251] Varina Davis, *Jefferson Davis, Ex-President of the Confederate States of America: A Memoir by His Wife*, vol. 1, (New York: Belford Company, 1890), 76.

American government for decades. His tribe, the Sauk, as well as the Fox Peoples ceded large portions of their land to the U.S. government in 1804 and were forced to live on a small government-owned area.[252] By 1829, white settlers continued to encroach on traditional lands, forcing the Sauk to settle on the west bank of the Mississippi River. However, the winter of 1831-1832 proved difficult and the Sauk sought to return to their ancestral homeland in search of food.[253] This trek into the opened land was considered an invasion by the U.S. government. Several attempts by the federal government were made requesting the Sauk to leave the area. Black Hawk, however, refused to lead his people back to starvation and instead tried to negotiate a peaceful solution. He gathered support from tribes from both sides of the U.S.-Canadian border to form a coalition to fight back against the American attempt to again remove the Sauk from their ancestral lands.[254] In mid-July 1832, Colonel Henry Dodge was called to capture Black Hawk and the leaders of the Sauk to halt what the government defined as a rebellion.[255] Black Hawk supposedly embodied the definition of the enemy, which was already prevalent in attitudes toward Indigenous peoples. Black Hawk's capture and dehumanization only reinforced Davis's perception of Native Americans as the enemy.

Americans already categorized Black Hawk as a wild man, and upon his defeat that wildness remained on display for all to see. Davis did not participate in the fighting during the war as he was on leave in Mississippi visiting his family but he did rejoin his

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[252] Cooper Jr., *Jefferson Davis: American, 53.*

[253] *Tanner*, Atlas of Great Lakes Indian History, 151.

[254] Ibid., 151-153.

[255] Ibid., 153.

company at an important time.[256] Black Hawk escaped capture at the Battle of Bad Axe, the last battle of the war, on August 2, 1832. Yet, he did not get far as a group of Winnebago captured him then handed the warrior over to Indian Agent Joseph Street.[257] Colonel Zachary Taylor, Davis's superior officer, ordered his men to take Black Hawk and his men to Fort Jefferson to be held until further notice. Davis was among those assigned to escort the prisoners back to the fort.[258] He helped to bring back over sixty prisoners and in doing so received praise from his commanders. During the company's travels, Davis experienced the realities of frontier racism and enacted his role in the advancement of these ideas.

The racism associated with the frontier was a feature of Davis's reality. Slotkin argued that expansionists generally characterized Native Americans as savages. Not only were they racially inferior but they were also wild – almost animal-like.[259] However, many soldiers respected the fighting capabilities of Native American warriors and saw them as worthy opponents.[260] This was also the reality that Davis experienced as a soldier. As the personal escort to Black Hawk, Davis acted as a guard to the spectacle of the Americans who wished to see the defeated Indian. On one leg of the journey, Davis's party required a steamboat to travel down river. The once brave warrior was now on display to all who could catch a glimpse of him. Consequently, Davis did his best to keep

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[256] Cooper Jr., *Jefferson Davis: American,* 53.

[257] Ibid., 54.

[258] Ibid., 55.

[259] Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment,* 53.

[260] William T. Allison, Jeffrey Grey, and Janet G. Valentine, *American Military History: A Survey from Colonial Times to the Present*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2016), 136.

spectators away from Black Hawk's quarters much to the appreciation of the warrior.[261] Once at Fort Jefferson, however, Davis was unable to discourage all the spectators. Several men came to view the Native warrior as if he was a caged animal. Davis was ordered by his superiors to allow guests at the fort, such as Washington Irving, to observe the Sauk warrior as if he was a display.[262] Davis himself was not interested in treating Black Hawk as less than human; his environment, on the other hand, was one beset with attitudes of racial superiority. Though Black Hawk was a defeated non-white soldier Davis still accorded him common respect as a human being and not as a sub-human. Although racism was present in his work, the binary of civilized versus savage was not a cohesive narrative that characterized all his experiences. For Davis, however, this was only a small step in his frontier military career and the campaign of fighting Native American tribes in order to continue the expansion of the frontier. The more time that Davis spent in the military, however, the more he regarded Native Americans as an inferior race.

As a soldier Davis continued to be the enforcer of progress denoting that he encouraged pioneer settlement on the ever expanding frontier. Black Hawk's defeat marked an end to immediate resistance against Anglo-Saxon settlement in the Old Northwest. The war's end opened up a strip of land on the western bank of the

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[261] Black Hawk, *Black Hawk: An Autobiography*, ed. Donald Jackson, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1955), 163.

[262] Cooper Jr., *Jefferson Davis: American,* 55. Irving was a writer who during the 1830s promoted the concept of masculinity on the frontier. His stories included extensive work on frontiersmen and soldiers as well as their embodiment of American values. The presence of Irving, who wrote about the frontier, in Davis's life at the same time he is observing the cultural associated with the frontier myth serves as a measure of historical irony. It also serves to show that these cultural motifs had a long lasting legacy that survived several generations through written stories. Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment*, 117-118.

Mississippi in modern-day Iowa.[263] Zachary Taylor sent troops from Fort Crawford into the newly opened territory to ensure that it was safe for settlement. Among the men sent to protect this area was Lieutenant Davis.[264] His return to Fort Crawford in late 1832 marked another significant occasion in his life; Davis fell in love with the daughter of his commanding officer, Sarah Knox Taylor. General Taylor reportedly liked Davis as an officer, but did not want him to marry his daughter because he did not want her to marry a military man. The young couple met as often as they could, sometimes in secret, and became engaged against the wishes of Colonel Taylor.[265] The couple would, however, be separated for two years by Davis's promotion. Davis chose his duty to the military over his fiancé. In 1833, the United States Congress created a division of Dragoons, or mounted infantry men. They were to be stationed at Jefferson Barracks just south of St. Louis, Missouri. Colonel Taylor assigned Davis to the Dragoons in April of 1833, where he would serve as First Lieutenant.[266] His promotion came with a new assignment at Fort Gibson, Arkansas. Being part of this elite unit of Indian fighters solidified Davis's devotion to the frontier and to the employment of violence to enforce racial superiority.

Davis's assignment in Arkansas highlighted the use of violence as well as its correlation with race on the frontier. Fort Gibson was on the edge of Anglo-American settlement where racial conflict was a daily occurrence. The dragoons' assignment was to

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[263] Guy S. Brewer, *Iowa Official Register for the Years 1911-1912*, vol. 24, (Des Moines: Emory H. English, 1912), 10-11.

[264] Allen, *Jefferson Davis: Unconquerable Heart*, 76.

[265] Jefferson Davis to Sarah Knox Taylor, 16 December 1834, letter, in *The Papers of Jefferson Davis*, vol. 1, 345-347.

[266] Albert Gallatin Brackett, *History of the United States Cavalry: From the Formation of the Federal Government to the 1st of June, 1863,* (New York: Harpers and Brothers Publishing, 1863), 48.

maintain peace between the Americans and the Native Americans (Kiowa and Pawnee) in the area.[267] Davis's assignment at Fort Gibson came amidst President Jackson's Indian Removal policy that saw the removal of thousands of Native Americans from their homelands in order to open up the land for Anglo-American settlements.[268] Much like the federal government's plan to remove thousands of Native Americans west of the Mississippi, Fort Gibson was a station to displace more Native Americans for land.

The Dragoons' activities in Arkansas were to demonstrate the strength of the United States in order to allow settlement to continue. Davis's role was to allow the frontier to advance by any means necessary. The continued general encroachment upon native lands incited tensions between settlers and the Native people but that was the tactic of the U.S. frontier; induce conflict and then conquer the area once fighting ensued.[269] Engaging in these fights against the Indigenous peoples would shape Davis's ideas about violence, positioning them firmly in the context of the frontier myth. Slotkin argued that violence against Native Americans was considered necessary to promote the settlement of a civilized society. Out of this notion of civilization came the perception that the Anglo-American race itself was superior to Native Americans and in this way the use of violence was justified as progress.[270] Smith concurred stating that the romanticized version of the frontiersman's persona featured violence as a prominent characteristic. He

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[267] Ibid., 58-59.

[268] Christian B. Keller, "Philanthropy Betrayed: Thomas Jefferson, the Louisiana Purchase, and the Origins of Federal Indian Removal Policy*," Proceedings of American Philosophical Society* 144, no. 1, 39.

[269] Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence,* 243.

[270] Ibid., 51-52.

was a defender of civilization and progress meaning violence was part of his role.[271] This was precisely Davis's role as an officer during his time at Fort Gibson; he was an enforcer of violence. In 1834, the War Department ordered the Dragoons to march into the heart of Pict Pawnee and Comanche territories as a show of strength. Their mission was to intimidate the tribes into signing a treaty with the American government. If this could not be achieved, they were to defend the settlers by force if necessary.[272] This was the same tactic deployed by Davis at Fort Crawford. The Pict Pawnee signed the treaty with the Indian agent at Fort Gibson.[273] The intimidation tactic only partially worked; the Comanche did not follow suit. Instead, they continued to threaten travelers on the Santa Fe Trail inducing Davis and the Dragoons to use violence to force the Comanche into submission.[274] This act would be a defining moment for Davis as it would be this enforcement of American expansion that cemented the association of violence and race with the frontier. By participating in the conquest of the frontier, violence, racism, and the development of the nation became connected in Davis's mind. His military experience would later inform his rhetorical development and statesmanship when he faced issues concerning wars of imperialism. In Davis's later political career during the

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[271] Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), 106.

[272] Louis Pelzer, *March of the Dragoons in the Mississippi Valley: An Account of the Marches and Activities of the of the First Regiment of the United States Dragoons in the Mississippi Valley Between the Years 1833 and 1850*, (Iowa City: State Historical Society of Iowa, 1917), 34-37. The Dragoons would later be called the First Regiment of Dragoons when additional regiments were added in 1836. In 1861, the name would again be changed to the First Regiment of Cavalry. All names refer to the same cavalry regiment.

[273] Cooper Jr., *Jefferson Davis: American*, 59.

[274] J. W. Powell, "The Dragoon Expedition," in *Seventeenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution*, vol. 1, (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1898) 168-169.

Indian Wars (1850s-1880s), he recalled his time in the Dragoons and the rhetoric he employed demonstrated how he thought of race in relation to his time as a soldier.

In 1850, Congress was debating whether to expand the army to subdue Native American tribes in the interior of the continent.[275] During the debate, Davis stated that "[the Dragoons] can, I believe, tame the terror of those predatory Indians which infest the borders of Texas. Our race is superior to theirs; our horses are superior to theirs; we are their superiors in every way."[276] Being part of the Dragoons and accepting an active role in the conquest of Native Americans developed a sense of superiority in Davis that led him to argue for the further expansion of the U.S. cavalry. This was not just a sense of military superiority but of racial superiority as well. This sentiment was so strong that Davis even claimed that American horses were superior and this emerges from his devaluation of Indigenous people. This sentiment is also evident in Davis' statement that they "infest" areas in Texas. This description of Indigenous people as similar to insects lowers their value as humans, which, in turn, justified the use of violence against them. Slotkin has argued that perpetuating the idea that Indigenous people were subhuman made subjugating them easier. Additionally, the image of the savage Indian made the frontiersman a greater hero upon defeating such a threat to settlers.[277] According to Smith, the victory of the civilized hero over the savage was the foundational occurrence of the expansion of the American empire. The savages were defeated, removed, and

[275] James A. Sawicki, *Cavalry Regiments of the US Army*, (Dumfries: Wyvern Publications, 1985), 42-43.

[276] Jefferson Davis, "Remarks of Jefferson Davis on the Bill to Increase the Rank and File of the Army," 11 June, 1850, in *Jefferson Davis, Constitutionalist; His Letters, Papers, and Speeches*, vol. 1, ed. Dunbar Rowland, (Jackson: Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1923), 360.

[277] Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment*, 460-461.

contained to make room for those more deserving of the land.[278] The language used to describe Native Americans was part of the tactic of separating Native Americans from Anglo-Saxons so that appropriating native land became an act of progress rather than an act of imperialism. This distinction was a political tool used to promote territorial expansion and one that Davis himself used in his own language.

To protect settlers in Texas from these dehumanized creatures, Davis sought to create a military unit that could enforce the will of the United States. Davis felt that an elite unit of light cavalry was the key to forcing Native Americans into submission. Davis used his experiences on the frontier and interactions with Native Americans to create this rhetoric in order to promote settlement in Texas. Notwithstanding how integral the Dragoons were to Davis's perceptions and rhetoric of the frontier, his time with the unit was cut short. After defeating the Comanche, Davis returned to Fort Gibson and remained there until the end of his service in the army. Despite Davis's devotion to the army, and specifically the Dragoons, difficulties in the chain of command forced Davis to reconsider his role as a soldier.

Inevitably, perhaps, his feelings of pride as a young man resurfaced affecting his position as a soldier. Though Davis had risen through the ranks as an officer he had continued to experience minor incidents with other soldiers after leaving the academy.[279] Upon his return to Fort Gibson in 1834, Davis had problems with the chain of command. He was reprimanded for not standing outside his tent during roll call and for arguing with

[278] Smith, *Virgin Land*, 52-53.

[279] Cooper Jr., *Jefferson Davis: American*, 42.

Major Richard B. Mason, a friend and fellow cadet at the academy; an incident which his superior deemed insubordination.[280] Davis then faced a court-martial in which the jury decided in his favor. The incident left Davis with a disdain for his superior officers. In 1835, Davis resigned his position as a military man and transitioned into the next phase of his life.[281] Davis returned to Mississippi with his experiences from the military influencing his opinions of race and expansion. The subsequent development of Davis's life as a civilian was instrumental to his political ideology before the U.S.-Mexican War as it directed his political views to match those of his home state.

From his years fighting on the frontier, Davis had developed a soldier's mentality but now the cultural motifs that Davis had learned as a boy also became part of his adult life. Jefferson modeled his new life after that of his brother and determined to become a planter. He first married his fiancé Sarah Knox Taylor on June 17, 1835, at Joseph Davis's Hurricane Plantation.[282] Upon leaving the army, Davis had almost nothing to his name. With help from his older brother, Davis established an estate for himself from the family's holdings and by purchasing additional land surrounding the perimeter of property resulting in a total property of 2,320 acres of land.[283] Davis then established his

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[280] "Proceedings of Court Inquiry-Twelfth Day, Case of Richard B. Mason," 17 January, 1837, *Jefferson Davis, Constitutionalist; His Letters, Papers, and Speeches*, vol. 1, 421-422.

[281] Jefferson Davis to General Arbuckle, 20 April 1835, *The Papers of Jefferson Davis*, vol. 1, 402.

[282] Sarah Knox Taylor to Margaret Mackall Smith Taylor, 17 June 1835, *The Papers of Jefferson Davis*, vol. 1, 406.

[283] Frank Edgar Everett Jr., *Brierfield: Plantation Home of Jefferson Davis*, (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 1971), 24.

own plantation with twenty slaves and borrowed money from his eldest brother.[284] However, the first years of planting did not prove fruitful for Davis and this slow start to plantation life was only made worse during the winter of 1836 when both Davis and his wife became severally ill. While Davis himself recovered, his wife died.[285] To relieve his grief, Davis went on a cross-country trip during which he reconnected with his childhood friend, George W. Jones, then a congressman from Michigan. He was also introduced to Franklin Pierce, whom he quickly befriended. In addition to establishing connections in Mississippian Democratic circles, Pierce was Davis's introduction to politics in the South.[286] Davis's trip and the connections he formed reacquainted the Mississippian with the Southern planter class and their politics.

The political sentiment that Davis encountered when reacquainting himself with Southern Democratic ideology reflected many of the values he had embodied as a soldier. These values included morality, strength, and dedication to expansion.[287] He returned to Mississippi in late 1836 and reestablished himself as a cotton planter, building a personal fortune that helped to launch his political career. During this time of rebuilding, Davis spent considerable time at his brother's estate and studied in the library at the family mansion.[288] Davis studied several works including the works of Thomas Jefferson, *Wealth of Nations* by Adam Smith, *The Debates in Several States Conventions* by Jonathan Elliot, *A View of South America and Mexico* by John Milton Niles, and the

[284] Ibid., 26.

[285] Cooper Jr., *Jefferson Davis: American*, 68.

[286] Allen, *Jefferson Davis: Unconquerable Heart*, 97.

[287] Greenburg, *Manifest Manhood,* 12-13.

[288] Allen, *Jefferson Davis: Unconquerable Heart*, 103.

Bible.[289] The literature Davis examined explored ideas of law, American expansion, and spreading American values such as Christianity and democracy, while engaging in the necessary violence to capture land from the people who currently occupied it. This empire was for Anglo-American men only and excluded Native Americans, blacks, the Spanish, and women.[290] Thomas Jefferson's plan was to continue to expand the nation with his own values embedded in his new empire. Davis was a part of the legacy of Jefferson's empire, which was continued by President Andrew Jackson, during his time in the army. He was the enforcer of these policies on the ground and helped to push Native Americans off their land in order to expand settlement. Davis's experiences on the frontier, supplemented by the political ideology instilled in him by his older brother, helped cement Davis's ideology into one that favored the Southern planter class and idealized the social mobility provided by the opportunities of the frontier.

These experiences shaped Davis into a messenger regarding the importance of the frontier. Slotkin regarded the frontiersman who has returned to American society as a heroic figure who has gained wisdom through his violent encounters.[291] His role in the violence is not only morally acceptable, it is celebrated and his job on return is then to

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[289] Cooper Jr., *Jefferson Davis, American*, 89-90. Davis, *Jefferson Davis, Ex-President of the Confederate States of America: A Memoir by his Wife*, Vol. 1, 171-173. Jefferson Davis to William Allen, 24 July, 1840, letter, in *The Papers of Jefferson Davis*, vol. 1, 147-148.

[290] John M. Murrin, "The Jeffersonian Triumph and American Exceptionalism," *Journal of the Early Republic* 20, no. 1, (Spring 2000), 3-4.

[291] Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment,* 374. Slotkin discussed the importance of other figures, such as Andrew Jackson and Sam Houston, and the impact that their experience as frontiersmen had on their political rhetoric. They also tried to push for the advancement of the frontier. In this regard, Davis's promotion of the frontier myth is similar to these figures but it can be seen that his impact on his part of the promotion of the U.S.-Mexican War is glossed over in favor of analyzing his role in the Civil War. His role in the U.S.-Mexican War is not necessarily considered to be a continuation of the ideological principles that Davis developed in his early political career.

share his knowledge about the frontier and the Indigenous people. The frontiersman serves as a testament to the frontier and the actions that needed to be taken in order to secure it.[292] This was Davis's role in politics. He brought his knowledge of the frontier to the politics of westward expansion. When Davis entered politics in 1838, frontier expansion was the most prevalent issue. As a politician, his political ideology would reflect the importance of the frontier just as it had when Davis was a soldier.

Once Davis had amassed a small fortune and reacquainted himself with the planter elite in Mississippi, he turned to politics and became an influential politician in the Mississippi Democratic Party. One of the most pressing issues occurring in the same years as Davis's arrival on the political scene was the Panic of 1837. This economic downturn hit the Mississippian cotton market particularly hard causing plantation owners and average farmers alike to suffer large losses to their profits.[293] In order to stabilize Mississippi's economy, the state took out several loans with the Planter's Bank and the Union Bank of Mississippi. Democratic leaders in the state congress had discussed refusing to pay their bonds to the Union Bank as they felt their money would go to the banks of the Whigs in New England.[294] This transfer of money to the North was a major concern for Davis and for this reason he made it a part of his political platform. Davis

[292] Ibid., 374-375.

[293] Cooper Jr., *Jefferson Davis: American*, 87.

[294] Dudley S. Jennings, *Nine Years of Democratic Rule in Mississippi: Being Notes Upon the Political History of the State From the Beginning of the Year 1838 to the Present Time*, (Jackson: Thomas Palmer, 1847), 61-63.

voiced his concerns to Mississippi Democrats in his first significant political undertaking.[295]

The independence of Texas offered an opportunity for the South to further expand and regain some of its lost capital. Politically, Texas allied itself with the South over the issue of slavery, however, the issue of admitting Texas to the Union met partisan opposition over the expansion of slavery.[296] In order to argue for annexation, Davis had to approach the issue in another way. He did so by addressing the legacy and heroism of conquering the frontier as a noble cause worth protecting rather than focusing on the growth of the South. His experience on the frontier allowed him to create a heroic image of expansion and this became part of his political rhetoric. Once Davis had achieved prominence in the political arena, his use of the frontier myth in his rhetoric concerning the U.S.-Mexican War remained at the forefront of his arguments.

Davis built his political platform around Southern interests and expansion and, combined with his oratorical skills, Davis rose quickly through the Democratic Party. In August 1840, Davis began his campaign for the Mississippi House of Representatives but ultimately lost.[297] By November 1842, Warren County had appointed Davis as the delegate to the state Democratic convention.[298] The following year Davis again attended

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[295] Joseph Emory Davis to Jefferson Davis, 19 January 1838, letter in *The Papers of Jefferson Davis*, vol. 1, 437-438.

[296] Cooper Jr., *Jefferson Davis: American*, 86.

[297] Ibid.

[298] "Notice of the Proceedings of the Warren County Democratic Convention" December 17, 1842, in *The Papers of Jefferson Davis*, Vol. 2, ed. James McIntosh, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1987), 15.

the state convention though he did not win the nomination for elector.[299] Though these were small steps in Davis's career, he was able to familiarize himself with the local political scene. By 1844, Davis had made a name for himself in the Democratic Party and in the same year Warren County elected him to the state Democratic convention. This time however, the convention selected him as one of the six electors of the Democratic nominee for president.[300] The convention desired that Davis support Martin Van Buren for president and James K. Polk for vice president; Davis, however, preferred John C. Calhoun.

For Davis, Calhoun represented the interests not only of the South but of a nation predicated upon expansion. Unlike the careful politicians in Washington, Calhoun was a man focused on raising the Southern economy even if that involved risk. During the Nullification Crisis of 1828, Calhoun opposed the increased tariffs on imported goods. This meant that American manufacturing was favored over foreign goods. The tariff would allow the North to meddle in the slave economy system by making goods such as cotton less desirable to foreign markets, which would hurt the Southern economy.[301] To Davis, Calhoun's courage was what the South needed to recover from the economic hardship that it had been facing. In this way, the use of the frontier myth in Davis's promotion of Calhoun and the annexation of Texas was about concealing a means of

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[299] "Notice of the Proceedings of the State Democratic Convention" November 1, 1843, in *The Papers of Jefferson Davis*, Vol. 2, 37-38.

[300] Cooper Jr., *Jefferson Davis: American*, 98. Calhoun was as the Secretary of War who issued Davis's "issue of cadet" in 1827 which led to Davis long military career.

[301] Ibid., 121-122. William J. Cooper Jr*., The South and the Politics of Slavery, 1828-1856*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978), 161-162.

furthering the plantation system. Davis accomplished this by drawing attention to the benefits that Calhoun could offer the South as president and focusing on the Southern cultural motifs that were part of the frontier myth.

Davis begun his 1844 speech in Jackson, Mississippi by claiming that the former president, Martin Van Buren, had not upheld the values of the Democratic Party nor those of the South during his time in office.[302] Not only did Van Buren support a tariff that would greatly hurt Southern profits but he also opposed the annexation of Texas. Though Texas had won its independence from Mexico in 1836, Van Buren had not annexed the territory for fear of provoking a war with Mexico. [303] Though he did not personally attack Van Buren during his speech, Davis also did not justify the former president's actions.

Instead, Davis proposed Calhoun as the man who had Southern interests at heart. Davis portrayed Calhoun as a man who was willing to act for the interests of Mississippi by ensuring that the cotton market could profit and for whom expansion was a priority. Davis argued that by allowing Texas to remain as an unprotected state against the Mexican army, Americans showed weakness of character in the face of danger:

> The annexation of the republic of Texas to our Union, is another point of vital importance to the south, and demanding, by every consideration, prompt action. Daily we are becoming relatively weaker, and with equal step is the advance of that fanatical spirit which has for years been battering in the breach the defenses with which the federal constitution surrounds our institutions.[304]

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[302] Jefferson Davis, "Speech Recommending John C. Calhoun," Speech, Jackson, Mississippi, January 8, 1844, in *The Papers of Jefferson Davis*, Vol. 2, 70.

[303] Raúl Bringas Nostti, *La Regeneración de un Pueblo Pestilente: La Anexión de México a Estados Unidos, 1846-1848*, (Cuidad de México: Miguel Ángel Porrúa, 2008), 28.

[304] Davis, "Speech Recommending John C. Calhoun," *The Papers of Jefferson Davis*, Vol. 2, 73.

Davis's attention to strength as a characteristic of the American people mirrors Greenberg's discussion of Southern masculinity, honor, and character. Greenberg described Southern manhood as a system based on the veneration of strength and defense when honor was threatened.[305] Here Davis placed emphasis on the threat against Texas as an attack on national character. Slotkin alluded to Texas as a place mythologized by the literature of the time, such as dime novels, in which the legacy of the frontiersman continued on, and where manliness continued to exist through conquest.[306] Through its reluctance to fight, the United States apparently demonstrated weakness and disrespect toward the citizens on the frontier. By attributing the U.S.'s decision to not annex Texas to weakness, Davis called the masculinity of the nation into question. If the nation did not have the strength to annex Texas, then it was diminishing the masculinity of its people. Davis's speech implied that the careful nature of the then president John Tyler was not that of the conquering male. For although the president expressed the desire to annex Texas, he did not press for its annexation in the same way that Calhoun would. By underscoring this threat to the American character, Davis diverted attention from the economic benefit of adding Texas to the Union and instead made the issue of annexation about the American character.

Davis's connection between Calhoun and the call for expansion was not limited to Texas. In the same speech, Davis discussed the prospect of expanding beyond the continental United States and looking overseas to find other markets. This form of

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[305] Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood*, 139.

[306] Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment*, 162-163.

frontier expansion would not become a prevailing form of expansion for nearly another ten years. He claimed that in order to protect the Southern coast as well as trade, the expansion of the navy was necessary. The harbors of Florida and its surrounding islands could serve as bases for this expansion; the area though was under threat for "around [Florida] sweeps a wide curve of circumvallation, extending from the Oronoko [River] to the bans of the Bahama, from various points of which, within signal distance, frown the batteries of Great Britain."[307] The defense of the Southern coast was a proxy for Davis's concern about access to other markets. His promotion of Calhoun indicated that a faction of the Democratic Party was already concerned with a form of expansion that would take another fifty years to come to fruition when American and British trade interests conflicted over the expansion of trade.[308] Smith does state that the interest in the expansion of sea trade stemmed from another myth – the passage to India. The older European myth of finding a passage to Asia was, in fact, absorbed into the legacy frontier by expansionists – specifically Thomas Jefferson.[309] This inclusion of sea trade into the legacy of American expansion displayed the European roots and imperial basis of American culture. For Davis this was a call to new economic possibilities and frontiers.

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[307] Davis, "Speech Recommending John C. Calhoun," *The Papers of Jefferson Davis*, Vol. 2, 74.

[308] This refers to the Venezuelan Crisis of 1895 when the discovery of gold in the area prompted a British invasion of a neutral strip of land separating British Guiana and Venezuela. The president asked the former U.S. ambassador to Venezuela for help building support for Venezuela's claim to the land. He agreed to the proposal as the U.S. had vested trade interests in bananas, timber, and trade ports in Venezuela. President Cleveland restated that he supported the Monroe Doctrine and forced the British into arbitration. The U.S. had proven itself to be enforcers of their will in the Western Hemisphere and as a political power in the countries they traded with. This was part of the development of the American trade empire referred to by Slotkin at the end of the nineteenth century. For more information, see *Power and Policy* by Lawrence Lenz, 57-68.

[309] Smith, *Virgin Land*, 27-29.

Davis mentioned the Dry Tortugas, which the government had already surveyed in 1825 with the intention of transforming the small island into a naval base.[310] He continued the promotion of these islands as a naval base for protection and, subsequently, for American trade expansion into Latin America. Trade relations in this manner were the precursor to conquest of a new frontier that would begin after the Civil War.[311] In essence, Davis was proposing the expansion of sea trade, which would be at the center of the Spanish-American War fifty years later. Nonetheless, although Davis promoted a candidate that he thought offered a strong future for the country, it was not his candidate who won the nomination.

Although he was relatively unknown on the national stage, James K. Polk from Tennessee won the Democratic nomination in 1844, and Davis's desire to expand the nation increased under the man who valued expansion more than Davis himself.[312] He conceded to the winner and even campaigned for Polk in his run for the presidency. It would be under Polk that the expansionist policies for which Davis had campaigned would be realized. Davis himself ran for congressional representative, which he won in 1845, gaining a front row seat in the political shift toward expansionism and the realization of the frontier myth.[313] As a congressman, Davis had a national stage from which to promote expansionism under the Polk administration.

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[310] Steven T. Ross, *American War Plans, 1890-1939*, (New York: Routledge, 2002), 2.

[311] Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion*, 1860-1898, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1963), 150-151.

[312] Cooper Jr., *Jefferson Davis: American,* 99.

[313] Ibid., 100-101.

James K. Polk stimulated a wave of expansionism with a masculine rhetoric that mirrored Davis's own. In the days leading up to the inauguration, Polk's expansionist rhetoric began to affect the nation. In the last days of John Tyler's presidency, Texas was admitted into the Union on March 3, 1845.[314] When Polk began his presidency, one of his first actions as president was to send General Zachary and his troops close to the Rio Grande to the middle of a disputed strip of land between the Rio Grande and the Nueces River.[315] At the end of the Texas Revolution, the border between Mexico and Texas had not been agreed upon by both nations. Texans argued that the border was the Rio Grande; the Mexican federal government argued that the Nueces was the border. [316] The result of the troops' presence was several small skirmishes, allowing Congress to declare war on Mexico on April 27, 1846.[317] Troops were already mobilized by the time that Jefferson Davis entered into his position as the congressman from Mississippi in December 1846.[318]

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[314] Amy Greenburg, *A Wicked War: Polk, Clay, Lincoln and the 1846 Invasion of Mexico*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012), 61-62.

[315] Robert A. Calvert, Arnoldo de Léon, and Gregg Cantrell, *The History of Texas*, (Malden: John Wiley & Sons Inc., 2014), 105-106.

[316] Bringas Nostti, *La Regeneración de un Pueblo Pestilente,* 67-68. While the federal government of Mexico under Antonio Lopez de Santa Ana ratified the Nueces River as the border with Texas, civil war plagued Mexico's political center making the claims of the federal government weak. In 1842, Anastasio Bustamante was president but corruption plagued his administration and Santa Ana was forced into exile as the government feared he would lead a rebellion against them. Upon the U.S. invading the disputed territory, Santa Ana asked the Mexican government to be allowed back into the country to fight the U.S. Once Santa Ana returned to Mexico City he staged a coup and declared himself president. Despite the title, Santa Ana ruled more like a dictator and used his power as head executive of state as well the support of the military to enforce his policies.

[317] Gregg Calvert, Robert de Léon, and Arnaldo Cantrell, *The History of Texas,* (John Wiley & Sons, Inc.), 105.

[318] Allen, *Jefferson Davis: Unconquerable Heart*, 128.

Almost simultaneously, expansionists also attempted to gain ownership from the British of the Oregon Territory in the Northwest. Due to the rising tensions with Mexico over Texas, President Polk approached the issue diplomatically and negotiated with the British for ownership of the Oregon Territory.[319] The negotiating of the terms began in January before the outbreak of the war and the joint resolution was passed on February 9. However, the treaty with the British would not be finalized until June, 1846, after the war had already begun.[320] For Davis and many Southern Democrats, "Oregon held little interest in comparison with the desire to make Texas sure and to extend territory southwestward."[321] Davis did not address the issue of Oregon until he entered the House of Representatives as it was considered more of an inducement to Northerners rather than a political goal. Polk had campaigned for the annexation of the Oregon territory and the establishment of the international border on the 49th parallel.[322] In the first months of Polk's presidency, the issue came up for debate in Congress.

Oregon presented an opportunity for the Northerners to be included in the legacy of expansion that the South was pressing for with Texas. The rhetoric that promoted the annexation of Oregon was filled with the colorful language that characterized Jefferson

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[319] Tom Chaffin, *Met His Every Goal?: James K. Polk and the Legends of Manifest Destiny*, (Knoxville: University Tennessee Press, 2014),5.

[320] *The Papers of Jefferson Davis*, Vol. 2, 438.

[321] Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment,* 181.

[322] Thomas M. Leonard, *James K. Polk: A Clear and Unquestionable Destiny*, (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources Inc., 2001), 89-90. Polk campaigned to take Oregon not only as an extension of his imperialist policy but also as a political strategy to gain votes among free-soilers in the North. The Free-soilers wanted to add territory to the U.S. for the benefit of the Anglo-American farmer without the prospect of slavery following into the territories of the U.S. The Oregon Territory was to be a compromise that ensured that though Texas would be admitted as a slaveholding territory there would be a balance of slavery-free territory in the North.

Davis as one of the prominent representatives vying for the annexation of the territory. Slotkin proposed that, "the appeal of renewed expansion remained strong, and so the independence of Texas…furnished the occasion for a revival of some of the classic motifs of the Myth of the Frontier."[323] Texas's independence created an aura that glorified the cause and themes of masculinity, violence, and race that had become a recurring theme in American mythology. Though Slotkin argued that this was the case for Texas's annexation, the rhetoric of Oregon's annexation by both Polk and Davis displays much of the same style that complicates this theory. Davis's rhetoric for annexation for both Texas and Oregon included these motifs of the frontier myth. The Mississippian alluded to heroic figures, masculinity, and the legacy of the frontiersman to argue for the territory's annexation.

Davis's use of the frontier myth can be seen in his speech regarding the resolution to end the joint occupation in Oregon. His February 6, 1846, speech addressed the annexation of the Oregon Territory and American rights to the territory.[324] Davis regarded the lack of enforcement of the rights of U.S. citizens in the Oregon Territory as unacceptable considering that brave American citizens had crossed the most difficult physical landscapes to expand the territory of the United States for settlement. He stated:

> Sir, we have been asked why our citizens have left the repose of civil government to plunge into the haunts of savage beast and savage man. For an answer, I point to the energy and restless spirit of adventure which is characteristic of our people, and has contributed much to illustrate our history in peace and in war. They

[323] Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment,* 162.

[324] Jefferson Davis. "Speech in U.S. House of Representatives." Speech, Washington D.C., February 6, 1846, in *Jefferson Davis: The Essential Writings*. ed. William J. Cooper, (New York: Random House Publishing Group, 2003), 30.

> have exchanged repose for forest danger and privation; they have gone to the school of the wilderness, from which came forth the moral dignity of Daniel Boone, the giant greatness of Andrew Jackson.[325]

Davis suggested that the desire to venture to the frontier and leave the comforts of civilization was a feature of the American spirit. The conquest of both nature and the uncivilized man was, according to him, the compelling disposition of the American man. This exemplified Slotkin's concept of the frontier myth as race war, a fight for civilization over savagery.[326] Here Davis characterized these motifs as a part of frontier expansion even referring to the settling of the frontier as part of the history and the future of the nation. He did so by invoking the quintessential American frontiersman, Daniel Boone. His reference to Boone framed the act of conquest as a heroic action. Davis's reference to Boone also presented the connection between morality and the frontier. According to Davis, this morality issues from the American character and society. This exemplified Slotkin's idea that the morality of the frontiersman was part of his civilizing mission.[327] This notion was particularly embodied by Boone as Smith argued that no other man embodied the idea of a man on a mission than Boone in his attempt to settle the western frontier.[328] Davis's connection between Boone and moral character and the settlers of Oregon made the issue of annexation important to the legacy of the nation. Yet Davis does not leave the matter of the American character to a legendary figure only but also introduced Andrew Jackson into the discussion. Therefore, Davis consigned the

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[325] Ibid., 33-34.

[326] Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment,* 228-229.

[327] Ibid., 318.

[328] Smith, *Virgin Land*, 54-55.

greatness of American expansion onto Jackson, an agent of government supported actions of military expansion. Both frontiersman and military presence were part of this great American legacy according to Davis. This meant the war to expand the frontier was also part of that tradition. Instead of focusing on material acquisition gained through the action of imperialism, Davis focused on the necessity of expansion as part of the American character.

In his speech, Davis sought to use American masculinity to promote expansion into the Pacific Northwest. Davis went on to state that this territory belonged to the United States by right of conquest,

> If to hold for the common benefit the common property-to tame the wilderness and render it productive — incur sentence of excommunication… Sir the rifle is part and parcel of the frontier man. It contributes both to his food and his defense. You might as well divide the man and horse of the fabled Centaur, as take his rifle from the western pioneer. The tide of emigration bears them westward let it flow, until… our people shall sit down on the shores of the Pacific, and weep that there are no more forests to subdue.[329]

This rhetoric prioritized conquest in order to appropriate the land of the Indigenous people on the basis of their failure to develop its natural resources. Davis's time on the frontier shaped how he saw the conquest of the frontier as it mirrored his own experiences. The context of settling, conquering, and rendering the frontier productive came from Davis's memory of being a soldier defending this practice. He also discussed violence in his account of the frontiersman and the settlement of the Oregon Territory. He

[329] Davis. "Speech in U.S. House of Representatives," in *Jefferson Davis: The Essential Writings*. ed. William J. Cooper Jr., 35.

talked of the rifle skill of the frontiersman, which was an element of the martial skills that Southern expansionist masculinity praised much like Greenberg's description of martial manhood.[330] Davis completed this image by illustrating the nature of conquest and superiority. By stating that the pioneers would occupy the Pacific Coast having conquered everything he connected all the cultural motifs of the frontier. This conquest spoke to the martial prowess, the racial superiority, expression of masculinity, and the urge to conquer in one image. Slotkin argued that the power of American legends originated from the ability to take prizes of conquest, mostly land, as proof of victory.[331] This domination was what Davis believed the nation would accomplish with the U.S.-Mexican War. Davis himself was so dedicated to the idea of the frontier myth that he was willing to give up his own comfortable life to participate in the war.

Despite being a man of colorful rhetoric, Davis was also dedicated to the principles of Southern masculinity and duty to his country. In the early spring of 1846, Davis thought about rejoining the military in order to fight Mexico.[332] However, President Polk asked Davis to remain until the final vote on the Walker Tariff, which cut the tariffs enacted in 1842 which had affected Southern export profits.[333] Therefore, Davis continued to work as a politician until he could depart for war. In his remaining time in the House of Representatives, Davis continued to make speeches about expansion and the character of the nation.

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[330] Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood*, 272-273.

[331] Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence*, 5.

[332] Cooper Jr., *Jefferson Davis, American*, 126.

[333] Ibid.

His May 12, 1846, open letter to the men of Mississippi revealed that violence and domination were not only characteristics of the American spirit but also political tools. As the negotiations over Oregon came to a close, Davis wrote an open letter calling for more volunteers from Mississippi.[334] He wanted to ensure that the U.S.-Mexican War would quickly result in a U.S. military victory. The frontier remained ever present in the talk of expansion particularly in the discussion of violence in conquest. Davis stated:

> Before that time we ought to close all questions with Mexico, and have the ship overhauled for action on a larger scale. Let the treaty of peace be made at the city of Mexico, and by an American Ambassador who cannot be refused a hearing—but who will speak with that which levels walls and opens gates — American cannon."[335]

Davis did not want a peaceful end to the conflict with Mexico; he wanted to advance the fighting to Mexico City meaning that the soldiers on the ground would fight their way to victory. Davis suggested that the Americans should intimidate the Mexicans into submission through a show of force. Much like his former experience in the military, as well as his discussion of the Dragoons, Davis proposed that the way to end the war with Mexico was to completely dominate their enemy with force. According to Slotkin's assessment of the Cooperian model, the frontiersman's violent nature was the only way to perpetually ensure the safety of frontier settlements.[336] So, too, was violence essential to ending the war with Mexico according to Davis. Fighting to Mexico City would ensure peace on U.S. terms. However, Davis's motivations went beyond safety. He was part of

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[335] Jefferson Davis, "Jefferson Davis on the Oregon Territory," Speech, Washington D.C., May 12, 1846, in *The Papers of Jefferson Davis*, Vol. 2, 590-591.

[336] Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence*, 486-487.

the expansionist Democrats who, in 1848, sought to annex the majority of Mexico's Northeastern territory.[337] When the United States seized the capital city there was little room for the Mexican government to deny the cession demands of the United States, which presented them with the opportunity of seizing as much land as they desired. This meant that the slave-holding South would gain even more territory than envisioned in earlier designs of post-war cessions. It was highly likely that Davis would focus on the aspects of fighting and victory rather than the implications of the conditions under which that victory was won. His principles of the frontier – conquest and masculinity – ran so deep, however, that the idea of going to war never left his mind.

Ultimately, the call to war was too great for Davis to ignore and in July 1846, he resigned his seat in Congress in order to join the U.S.-Mexican War, eager to reaffirm his own masculinity.[338] In a letter to her mother, Davis's second wife, Varina Banks Howell, described the argument that the married couple had over Davis's decision to join the fighting and his perception of the gendered nature of war. Upon hearing the news that Davis had re-enlisted, his wife became upset.[339] She stated, "Jeff thinks there is something the matter with me but I know there is not."[340] Though Varina's fearful reaction to her husband's decision to go to war appears a normal reaction, Davis did not sympathize. He felt that Varina was unable to understand why he had decided to go

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[337] William J. Cooper Jr., *Jefferson Davis and the Civil War Era*, (Baton Rogue: Louisiana State University Press, 2008) 22.

[338] Cooper Jr., *Jefferson Davis, American*, 126.

[339] Varina Davis to Margaret Howell, 6 June 1846 in *The Papers of Jefferson Davis*, ed. Lynda L. Crist, Vol. 10, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997), 641-642.

[340] Ibid.

because she was a woman and by her nature did not understand the necessity of war.[341] The masculine rhetoric that Davis spoke of in politics was something that he had internalized. While it was a tool to acquire votes to go to war, this sentiment of proving one's masculinity through conquest was also a practice that Davis employed in his own life. Greenberg described one characteristic of martial manhood as the duty to guard the American way of life through conflict.[342] This was certainly the case for Davis and a pattern as it had been for his older brothers during the War of 1812 and for himself at Fort Gibson. He ignored the emotional appeals of his wife and remained determined to prove his worth as a man despite her protests. A masculine man went beyond the qualities of a storybook hero for Davis. He became the colonel of his own regiment of Mississippi volunteers in late July of 1846.[343] As a military leader, he tried to inspire his men with the same principles that he had preached in congress leading up to the war.

The skills and dedication to the frontier myth that Davis had learned during his time in the military characterized his personality on the battlefield. During the war, Davis served under his former father-in-law, Zachary Taylor. He reinvigorated his reputation as a leader, loyal to his men as he had done on the Michigan frontier. Davis's regiment travelled through the northeastern Mexican desert on the heels of General Taylor's forces.[344] He proved to be a fearless commander, which ensured his rise to fame in several battles including the Battle of Monterrey where Davis led his men to capture the

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[341] Ibid.

[342] Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood*, 104-106.

[343] Allen, *Jefferson Davis: Unconquerable Heart*, 136.

[344] General Zachary Taylor to Colonel Jefferson Davis, 3 August 1846 in *The Papers of Jefferson Davis*, ed. James T. McIntosh, Vol. 3, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981), 14-15.

town's forts.[345] He was not simply a strategist; Davis was before his men in every battle living out the glory of conquest and the expression of masculinity alongside them.

Accordingly, Davis attempted to be the embodiment of the frontiersman that he vaunted and a valiant leader to his men. In a letter home, Joseph Howell, Davis's brother-in-law, described Jefferson Davis's command as nothing less than heroic, "He is always in front of his men, and ready to expose himself…he has taken them into so many tight places, and got them out safely, they begin to think if they follow him they will be sure to succeed…I never wish to be commanded by a truer soldier than Col. Davis."[346] Davis embraced the physicality of war that Greenberg has suggested characterized manliness during the Mexican War.[347] More than any other of the figures analyzed in this thesis, Davis's rhetoric and experiences mutually reinforced each other throughout his lifetime. The Mexican-American War was the ultimate medium for the expression of his ideas of masculinity, and he seized every opportunity to achieve glory throughout the war.

Davis continued to fight on the front lines through the Battle of Tampico, despite several severe injuries.[348] He continued to battle through Mexico with his regiment, and became known as the Hero of Buena Vista for the crucial field position his regiment held despite heavy casualties and injuries.[349] His actions did, however, cost Davis the glory of finishing the war. Due to the high number of severe injuries in his regiment, Davis and

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[345] Jefferson Davis to John A Quitman, 26 September 1846 in Ibid., 25-27.

[346] Joseph D. Howell to Margret Howell, October 13, 1846, in Davis, *Jefferson Davis, Ex-President of the Confederate States of America: A Memoir by his Wife*, vol. 1, 9.

[347] Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood*, 22-23.

[348] Allen, *Jefferson Davis: Unconquerable Heart*, 156.

[349] Ibid., 157.

his troops returned to New Orleans in June of 1847.[350] Though disappointed that his military career had ended, Davis would continue his political career in order to further the nation's expansion.

Following the war, Davis returned to politics and pursued his goal of expanding the nation across the North American continent. In August of 1847, when Senator Jesse Speight of Mississippi died Mississippi Governor Albert Brown appointed Jefferson Davis to his seat.[351] Due to his war injuries and sickness Jefferson Davis was unable to take his oath until December of the same year.[352] This placed Davis in a position of power at the end of the war. One of the first issues that Davis faced in Congress was the discussion about the terms of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Once again he articulated the same imperialist rhetoric that he had before the war started.

During these deliberations, Davis argued for the recognition of the American conquest of Mexican territory. He demanded an amendment to the treaty that would cede a large portion of the northeastern corner of modern Mexico to the United States. This amendment failed in a vote of 44-11 as northern Whigs opposed the ambitions of southern expansionists like Davis.[353] To stifle the imperialist actions of the United States, Whig party leaders proposed a bill to pay Mexico for the cession of California, New Mexico, Arizona, and parts of Utah territory.

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[350] Ibid.

[351] Cooper Jr., *Jefferson Davis: American,* 159-160.

[352] Allen, *Jefferson Davis: Unconquerable Heart*, 162.

[353] George Lockhart Rives, *The United States and Mexico, 1827-1848*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913), 634-636.

To Davis this was a betrayal of the lives sacrificed by American men who had fought to win California from the Mexican army.[354] In his speech on the Senate floor in 1848 regarding the bill, Davis argued that the conquest gave the United States the right to the land. Davis then went on to describe why the United States was more entitled to the land than the Mexican people; the reasoning included elements of nationalism and racism reminiscent of the frontier myth that Davis himself had spoken of before the war.

> They produce little to that which the country is capable of yielding; and year by year the amount is steadily decreasing. The country is going to waste, villages are depopulated, fields once highly productive in all that nature in her bounty yielded to the industry of man now lie uncultivated, and marked only by the remains of the [irrigation] ditches by which they were formerly watered.[355]

This part of the speech demonstrated the racial and gender elements that had been a feature of Davis' political rhetoric throughout his career. He argued that the Mexican people were incapable of using the land of California to its full potential or lacked the intelligence to turn California into a highly productive area. This was the same justification provided by Davis when he spoke of the conquering nature of the American man on the frontier while fighting against Native Americans. His racial sense of superiority endorsed Americans as much more capable guardians of the land. Much like Slotkin's description of the improper use of land by Native Americans, Davis branded the Mexican use of land as just as unproductive.[356] Therefore, it was justifiable for the land to be resettled by Americans. Davis's speech, however, did shed light on the duty of the

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[354] Jefferson Davis, "Exchange with John C. Calhoun on the Ten-Regiment Bill," Speech, Washington D.C., March 17, 1848, in *The Papers of Jefferson Davis*, Vol. 3, 286.

[355] Ibid.

[356] Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment*,191-192.

government to the frontier settler. The image of the frontiersman was not solely about his duty to the country, but the nation's duty to the frontiersman as well. By fighting for the nation he earned respect that should be rewarded. Though Davis' respect for soldiers stemmed largely from his own experience, it was also a political tactic. Attributing the settlement of land captured as a prize of war and reward for those who fought for it meant that the conquered land was a sacred item. It was the product of heroic action and should be treated as such rather than given back to the people from whom it had been taken. This interpretation made retaining the territory seem a reasonable request rather than evidence of direct imperialism.

Davis, however, went beyond rhetoric; he was a man of action who actively pursued the imperial expansion of the United States. This ideological system reinforced his call to war with Mexico and, in turn, the results of the war reinforced Davis's ideological system of masculinity and imperialism. This measure was one of the many attempted changes to the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo that the members of Congress proposed over the ensuing two years. Davis would combat many of them including the Wilmot Proviso.

The Wilmot Proviso was created in 1846 while the U.S.-Mexican War continued to be fought. This document attempted to ban slavery in the territories ceded from Mexico. In 1846, this proviso proposed to be the solution that would end the war. It failed in this, but resurfaced after the war as an amendment to the Treaty of Guadalupe-

Hidalgo.[357] Once again, however, the Wilmot Proviso was voted down but it raised concerns among Democrats, particularly Davis, that the unlimited expansion of slavery would not be permitted to continue and the nation would be forced to split in order to secure the system of slavery as a legitimate economic system. This would lead to the Compromise of 1850, which indicated that states below the 36'30' N parallel would be slaveholding states while anything north of that line would become a free state. California was admitted as a free state but the Utah and New Mexico territories would not have any slaveholding restrictions within them.[358] Davis thought this was a half measure that would end up disintegrating in a few years' time, a sentiment that would lead to his elevation to the Presidency of the Confederate States some years later. He resigned from his post as senator to run for governor of Mississippi with a declared position against the compromise. He was, however, defeated by Henry Foote and left without a public office until 1853 when Franklin Pierce made Davis his Secretary of War.[359] In 1857, Davis once again returned to the Senate just in time to witness the partisan issues that had begun to develop during his first run in politics reach their climax.

The settlement of Kansas and the admission of the territory as a slave state became Davis's greatest preoccupation. Men from Southern and Northern states hastened to Kansas in order to secure the votes that would admit Kansas as either a new slave or a free state.[360] Davis had worked his entire political career not only to ensure the settlement

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[357] Cooper Jr., *Jefferson Davis: American,* 206-207.

[358] Ibid.

[359] Allen, *Jefferson Davis: Unconquerable Heart*, 203.

[360] Ibid., 227.

of the frontier but also to promote the unlimited expansion of slavery as a means of improving the Southern economy. From Davis' viewpoint slavery was intrinsic to the settlement of the frontier and the two could not be separated. He saw the frontier as the means of the advancement of American institutions, to which slavery was fundamental. Though he thought that the parties of the North were wrong, Davis did not want the South to secede but rather to find another way to resolve the issues that were violently dividing the nation.[361] However, despite Davis's own preferences he eventually sided with his region and home state on the matter.

The issue of slavery and the political divide induced many of the Southern states to secede. On December 20, 1860, South Carolina declared its secession. Davis's home state of Mississippi followed shortly after the congressional Christmas recess declaring its secession on January 9, 1861.[362] While Davis thought that each state had the right to secede, he did fear a large-scale war. When the Confederate Constitutional Convention elected Jefferson Davis as its president, however, he did not refuse the position. As president and commander in chief, Davis was in charge of the military movements of the Confederate soldiers. Under such circumstances, he relied on the military connections that he had made during his time as a soldier but this would prove to be one of the key elements of his downfall.[363] Though he was friends with several army officers, these men were not necessarily qualified to contend with the ensuing economic struggles, lack of supplies for the army, and the industrialization of the North. Consequently, the

[361] Allen, *Jefferson Davis: Unconquerable Heart*, 251.

[362] Cooper Jr., *Jefferson Davis: American,* 318.

[363] Allen, *Jefferson Davis: Unconquerable Heart*, 288-289.

Confederate states fell to the Union. Davis remained the president of the Confederate states until May 5, 1865, when he formally dissolved the Confederate government.[364] Ironically, the greatest impression Davis left on history was through the changes instituted by President Lincoln as a result of the rebellious government that Davis had led. Though slavery ended as a result of the Civil War, a new American empire would be built upon the ashes of Davis' Confederacy.

The events of the Civil War led to the end of slavery, which effectively dissolved the main political division between the North and South, and in general, without that division the nation was able to focus on other interests such as the developing manufacturing economy. During Reconstruction the nation as a whole became a centralized body instead of a collection of loosely connected parts. The nation not only developed its infrastructure but created a more cohesive economic system which meant that the U.S. market could expand at a much faster rate.[365] The enterprise of nineteenth century capitalism impelled the United States to find other markets and resources outside of the nation. Though this was a similar motivation to that of the expansion into the Southwest, the growing market system became much more globally linked. In order to embrace this new frontier, greater access to ports and outposts was more essential for the United States than it had been prior to the U.S.-Mexican War. Despite changes occurring in the political and social world, the American frontier myth persevered in a different setting.

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[364] Ibid., 533.

[365] David Potter, "Jefferson Davis and the Political Factors in Confederate Defeat," in *Why the North Won the Civil War*, ed. David H. Donald, (New York: Touchstone, 1996), 110-111.

The frontier no longer existed on the land connected to the Union but rather existed beyond the ocean in places that were considered economically advantageous to the United States. Geography, however, did not change the systemic approach of the legacy of empire, conquest, and masculinity that had framed the U.S.-Mexican War. The leaders of the Spanish-American War of 1898, despite their differences to the previous generation of antebellum leaders, would go on to perpetuate the rhetoric of the American male conqueror much as their predecessors had nearly fifty years before.

Chapter 3: Henry Cabot Lodge

Henry Cabot Lodge did not live on the frontier nor did he ever set foot on a battlefield. He did not conquer territory to benefit the nation. Henry Cabot Lodge was a scholar, a writer, and a statesman. Lodge derived his notion of the frontier myth from a combination of family legacy and his studies in history. His early life consisted of observing his father's international trade business during the early stages of American economic expansion. This introduction to foreign trade presented new conquerable territory and served to create a new frontier for Lodge later in life. Overseas trade was in many ways similar to the continental frontier. The advantages centered on economic motivations, which fused with Lodge's fascination with American mythology.

As a historian, Lodge studied American history and became fascinated with legendary frontiersmen such as Davy Crockett. These legends represented a life of adventure and heroism that life in the late nineteenth century was unable to provide. Lodge represented the post-Civil War generation of men who felt removed from the frontier due to the industrialization of the United States. This economic change created what Richard Hofstadter has referred to as a psychic crisis for these men, that is, a need to act upon their frustrations with aggression.[366] Hoganson further places this within a gendered context by arguing that the belligerence resulting from this crisis was an effort to prove masculinity, thereby confirming it as a crisis of masculinity.[367] Consequently,

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[366] Richard Hofstadter, "Cuba, the Philippines, and Manifest Destiny," in *Paranoid Style in American Politics and other Essays*, (New York: Vintage Books, 2008), 147-149.

[367] Kristin Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish American and Philippine-American Wars*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 12. Hofstadter and Hoganson argued that approaches to masculinity surrounding the Spanish-American War

the perceived lack of masculine expression demanded a symbol behind which to rally in order to revive the lost masculinity of the nation. Men of the late nineteenth century, and specifically Lodge, found this masculine identity in the frontiersman.

Lodge's internalization of the frontiersman indicated that its appeal went beyond the reach of those directly connected to the frontier; rather it was a cultural ideology that filled a void in the masculine identity that had been lost to the urban industrial life of the 1880s and 1890s. The evolution of the frontiersman during the late nineteenth century reflects Slotkin's argument that these myths changed to fit the principles of the culture that they represented.[368] In the late nineteenth century version of the frontiersman, this included looking beyond the continent for territory to conquer in the economic interests of the United States.

Industrialization in the late nineteenth century promoted the expansion of foreign trade during the height of imperialism. In order to control access to raw materials as well as trade routes, the United States extended its control over several foreign countries responsible for raw material production. The most important of these territories were Spanish holdings that produced sugar, tobacco, and other raw materials critical to the

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differed from ideas of masculinity before the U.S.-Mexican War or martial masculinity. Yet, both dialogues of masculinity discussed the need to express physicality through war. While Greenberg characterized martial manhood as specifically Southern, the larger cultural system of masculinity in both these wars suggested that the need to express masculinity remained prevalent throughout times of expansion. The case of masculinity, therefore, was an extension of conquest indicating these two ideas require examination as interdependent concepts that this chapter seeks to address.

[368] Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860*, (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1973), 9.

U.S. economy.[369] The Cuban War of Independence in 1895 threatened to stifle the U.S. economy as the violence interrupted production and trade.[370] This created a premise for a war championed by Lodge as an outlet for men to demonstrate their masculinity.

Instead of focusing on the act of imperialism, Lodge used rhetoric that promoted war as a continuation of the frontier legacy in what would become known as the Spanish-American War. Lodge's rhetoric reflected similar cultural concepts that had been present in the rhetoric of the U.S.-Mexican War. Despite the nation's economic and social transformation gender, race, religion, and violence were still features of the rhetoric of conquest and larger American cultural systems as they had been almost fifty years earlier. The longevity of these concepts speaks to their cultural significance in the American identity of the frontiersman. Lodge's rhetoric was more than an internalization of a culture of conquest; it was a method to veil imperialism in the legend of the frontier.

Growing up in elite New England, Lodge was decidedly distant from frontier life. However, the frontier myth was still very present in Lodge's upbringing. In his autobiography, *Early Memories*, Lodge described his family history as consisting of heroic tales of pioneers and patriots.[371] Much like Polk, ancestry was the source of Lodge's early fascination with the frontier along with commerce and a global economy. The Lodge family had been a long line of merchants based in London who profited for over forty years from the expansive reach of the British Empire prior to their arrival in

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[369] David M. Pletcher, *The Diplomacy of Trade and Investment: American Economic Expansion in the Hemisphere, 1865-1900*, (Colombia: University of Missouri Press, 1998), 333-334.

[370] Ibid., 326-327.

[371] Henry Cabot Lodge, *Early Memories*, (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1913), 2.

America.[372] His paternal grandfather, Giles Lodge, came to Boston in the 1790s and established a commercial business that would remain part of the Lodge dynasty for several generations including that of Henry Lodge himself.[373] The history of the Lodge men was one of the economic growth of the United States as a nation. Their business evolved along with the nation and engaged with various nations as economic relations developed.[374] This made the Lodge family different kinds of American pioneers; they were voyagers of the seas. Slotkin has argued that the idea of the frontier was not limited to land-based territory but rather to a border of profit from which resources and wealth could be extracted.[375] Similarly, Smith noted that the Passage to India narrative incorporated into American mythology produced a fabled status for the growth of mercantile trade.[376] Overseas trade was not just a growing economic resource, however, it was Lodge's reality and legacy. The Lodge family entered into new economic territory in the effort to control markets as well as secure profitable opportunities.

As his double surname suggests, Lodge regarded both his paternal and maternal lineage as important. The Cabot lineage, that is, Lodge's maternal line, were settlers in their own right who were regarded as frontiersman and patriots. Cabot family history created another epic lineage from which Lodge drew his own sense of destiny. The Cabot

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[372] Ibid., 4.

[373] Ibid., 5.

[374] Ibid.

[375] Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment*, 45.

[376] Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), 27-29.

family were descended from settlers in Salem Town in the late 1630s.[377] The bulk of Lodge's family legacy derived from one man, specifically, his great-grandfather George Cabot. This ancestor was the epitome of the New England pioneer and patriot. As a young man, Cabot became a sea captain upon the Atlantic Ocean. By the 1780s, Cabot was a prominent sea merchant in Boston.[378] While sea mercantilism was not a new trade in the British Empire, the United States was in the midst of developing their own trade system. Specifically, Cabot was a member of the Boston merchants who were first in the former colonies to develop independent trade networks independent from the British.[379] Cabot's extensive knowledge of the sea and the number of ships in his company allowed him to become a privateer during the Revolutionary War.

Throughout the Revolutionary War and after, Cabot was chosen to be a representative for the town of Beverly, thereby demonstrating a dedication to the country through politics. The citizens of Boston first appointed Cabot a representative to the state in the U.S. Congress in 1787.[380] Cabot continued to dedicate his life to benefitting Massachusetts even after the war. In 1791, the people of Massachusetts elected George Cabot a senator of the state.[381] Slotkin argued that the American mythology regarding the formation of the country began with men who fought against the wilderness and the

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[377] Ibid., 8.

[378] Henry Cabot Lodge, *Life and Letters of George Cabot*, (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1878), 11.

[379] David Ormrod, *The Rise of Commercial Empires: England and the Netherlands in the Age of Mercantilism, 1650-1770*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 329. Until the mid-seventeenth century, the British government set up commission agencies in which they handled all trade colonial imports and exports.

[380] Lodge, *Life and Letters of George Cabot*, 15.

[381] Ibid., 38.

British to create a new home for the American people.[382] To Lodge, George Cabot was a patriot and a pioneer in his own right who embodied the willingness to fight and rebuild his country. Cabot exhibited dedication to his country, bravery, and martial manhood, along with the determination to return in order to serve his fellow countrymen in politics. In many ways, George Cabot stylistically mirrored the archetypical hero-soldiers such as Sam Houston depicted in later literary works.

Lodge portrayed Cabot in a way that glorified his profession as well as his military career. Slotkin described the legend of Sam Houston as one that revolved around virtue and heroism. Additionally, after fighting for his country, Houston became a defender of the common man in politics.[383] This model combined the virility of martial manhood in the hero's war-like nature with the defense of republicanism championed by the average man. Smith noted, however, that frontier heroes like Sam Houston or Daniel Boone were average men who became heroes.[384] Lodge's ancestors were not average men but gentlemen of the upper class and this distinction would be a defining characteristic throughout Lodge's life. Yet, he continued to portray his family as frontier heroes. In both cases the hero-soldier stood ready to defend his nation through violence yet the hero committed this act in defense of American, thereby, establishing him as a patriot.[385] The image of this hero that Lodge constructed from the legacy of his great-

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[382] Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence*, 4-5.

[383] Richard Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment: The Myth of the Frontier in the Age of Industrialization, 1800-1890*, (New York: Atheneum, 1985), 163.

[384] Smith, *Virgin Land*, 100-101.

[385] Amy Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum American Empire*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 193-194. Hoganson built upon the intersections of martial manhood for the defense of the nation and political power as the basis for jingoist arguments for the Spanish American

grandfather served as his inspiration. Similarly to Polk, Lodge used his family legacy to engage with a frontier life that he would never live.

The familial legacy circumscribed Lodge's childhood in the very place that he grew up which helped him develop a fascination with the heroism of the frontiersman. In Boston, Lodge lived in the same house that his grandfather had, surrounded by the history of his family's accomplishments. Through various heirlooms and pictures, the Cabot Lodge household was full of the legacy of the settlers of one of the key regions in the nation's origins.[386] Lodge described Boston as a town fascinated with its history and which had memorialized the people and events that occurred there. From the historic homes of Winthrop Place to the memorials to the Puritan pioneers who first settled the area, Boston's devotion to its history left a significant impression on Lodge.[387] The characteristic of the men who built and developed Boston became the legacy of the city.

Lodge's perceptions of masculinity and aggression came from the city's humble origins. Boston itself was largely founded by working men either in field work in the countryside or on the docks of Boston Harbor.[388] Lodge argued that the culture of physical labor throughout Boston's history made it a tough city with a strong

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War. Kristin Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish American War and Philippine-American Wars*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 10. Additionally, this signifies that the hero-soldier continued to be a prevalent symbol throughout American history.

[386] Lodge, *Early Memories*, 13-14.

[387] Ibid., 18. Henry Cabot Lodge, "Samuel Adams," in *A Frontier Town and Other Essays*, ed. Henry Cabot Lodge, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906), 130.

[388] Ibid., 129.

personality.[389] The Bostonian described the character of the city as a part of his childhood development, "It may have been narrow, austere, at times even harsh, this personality, but it was there and it was strong, manly and aggressive."[390] Lodge's perception of the working class legacy within Boston appeared to be a continuation of the legacy of the yeoman farmer. In this way, Lodge applied the class principles described by Slotkin to his own experience. Slotkin argued that the legacy of the frontiersman included a glorification of the simple farmer.[391] The physical lifestyle of the yeoman farmer displayed his manliness in his everyday actions, which Hoganson stated began to fade away during the industrialization of the latter nineteenth century.[392] Lodge's depiction of his hometown attempted to mythologize the environment in which he grew up despite living outside the class conditions that supposedly created this manly nature.

In fact, despite the glorification of Boston, Lodge lived a safe and pampered life from which he observed the manly nature of the working man. From his observations of the town, Lodge began to formulate his idea of the frontier legacy within his own environment. Much like Polk, Lodge was never able to experience the physical life of the frontier, thereby, creating a desire to embrace manliness. However, the Lodge family status confined Lodge to an academic life.[393] Lodge's father insisted that his son receive a

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[389] Ibid., 130-131. Lodge's role in the mythologizing of Boston and Massachusetts points to a cycle unique to Lodge. Unlike Polk and Davis, Lodge's belief in the frontier legacy goes beyond his internalization or use of it in his political rhetoric. Lodge himself became a perpetuator of the frontier legacy, he wrote several works to perpetuate the heroism of the frontier before, during, and after the Spanish American War.

[390] Lodge, *Early Memories*, 19.

[391] Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment*, 72.

[392] Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood,* 34-35.

[393] Lodge, *Early Memories*, 20.

sound education and sent him to the most prestigious schools in Massachusetts. There he gained a classical education and learned several languages including French and Latin.[394] This education further developed the admiration that Lodge had for the frontiersman of the west as well as the explorers of the sea.[395] The environment of ports and seafaring in combination with Lodge's family legacy emphasized the importance of the seaman to the development of the nation more than other expansionist figures. Lodge's idea of the frontiersman was not solely land-based as was the case with many of the heroes of the frontier. Lodge's partialities to expansionism by sea were not, however, simply based on legend. He had a tactile and economically based perspective on expansion through his family's business.

By watching his father, John Ellerton Lodge, manage his international trade business the young Henry Cabot Lodge experienced the growth of the American economic empire and incorporated the experience into his notions of expansion. As Lodge described in his autobiography, the sea became his frontier, "Senator Hoar said of me…I suffered from one serious misfortune—I had not been brought up in the country. I told him …that I had one great compensation in being brought up by the sea."[396] The primary objective for the legendary frontiersmen, as described by Slotkin, was the displacement of Native Americans and the conquest of land; the physical acquisition of land being the key to wealth and power.[397] Yet, the development of the nation

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[394] Ibid., 21.

[395] Ibid., 34-35.

[396] Ibid., 35.

[397] Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment*, 78-79.

experienced by Lodge was the escalation in global trade. The trade in which the Lodge family business engaged offered the development of nation through another form of wealth and power – capital. Only after the desire to secure resources became a pressing issue did territorial acquisition become a goal. Hoganson has stated that the empire that the United States developed during the latter half of the nineteenth century was an empire that sought to control land in order to extract profit.[398] Yet, within the rise of the economic empire there was also the same pattern of economic drive and displacement. Lodge witnessed this pattern over his childhood, which promoted him to internalize the control of trade as others internalized the acquisition of land.

The Lodge family business dealt with imports from China and the merchant ships that made the voyage to Asia in order to bring goods to the United States.[399] Lodge perceived firsthand the benefits and profits that trade with Asian markets brought to the United States in the mid-1800s. Though U.S. merchants had been trading with China formally since 1801, it had not been until the Treaty of Wanghia in 1844 that the two nations established formal trade agreements. This agreement heavily favored the United States in terms of tariffs, exchange rates, and even extraterritoriality with regard to Americans in China.[400] Only a decade later, the United States sought to initiate relations with Japan by sending Commodore Perry to Edo Bay (now Tokyo), Japan, with gunboats

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[398] Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood*, 199.

[399] Lodge, *Early Memories,* 22-23

[400] William F. Nimmo*, Stars and Stripes Across the Pacific: The United States, Japan, and the Asia-Pacific Region, 1845-1945*, (Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2001), 3.

to force the Imperial Government of Japan into formalizing a trade agreement.[401] In 1858, the apparently voracious United States pressured an internally weakened Japan to sign the Harris Treaty, which established a trading system heavily favorable to the United States.[402] Lodge's perception of the frontier was already embroiled in the global economic system that Slotkin argued would adapt the frontier myth to include overseas expansion.[403] John Ellerton Lodge's business was a result of the commercial American empire and one that took advantage of these favorable trade deals for the benefit of profit. Consequently, young Lodge's fascination with the global trade system and the American man traveling to distant lands across the sea would shape his political philosophy.

It was on leaving Boston that Lodge began to practice the physicality he sought desperately to experience adding to his fascination with masculinity. When Lodge was old enough to attend a larger private school, his father spared no expense in sending his son to a prestigious institute in order to further develop his classical education. In 1861, Lodge attended the Public Latin School of New England where the young man developed an appreciation for the wilderness.[404] Though Lodge remained a diligent student, in the company of other boys of wealthy families, his interests began to diversify. Activities he pursued included shooting, swimming, horseback riding, and fishing; all of which were outdoor activities that Lodge had not experienced in his early life in Boston.[405]

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[401] Ibid., 4.

[402] Ibid., 5-6.

[403] Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment*, 115.

[404] Lodge, *Early Memories*, 81.

[405] Ibid., 86.

While these were essentially pastimes for the elite, they did signify a trend in which upper class men attempted to capture the essence of the wilderness. These activities allowed these privileged young men to experience a physicality that the growing industrialized system of the North could not fulfill. Gail Bederman argued that the glory of physical sport became the remedy to an inactive society.[406] This would be a feeling familiar to many of Lodge's generation, which would grow into a social restlessness that needed to be remedied by discovering a new frontier to conquer. Lodge described this phenomenon in his own personal experience, "The true value of athletic sports is to the average boy like myself, who never arrives at any distinction, but who in this learns to like rough-and-tumble games and be fond of vigorous and wholesome exercise and of outdoor life."[407] Lodge believed that physical activity developed a sense of manliness within himself that would have otherwise been lacking due to the nature of the society in which he lived. He went on to say that his favorite of all these activities was horseback riding, but not just for leisure; through this activity Lodge lived out his dream of being a soldier.

Despite the fact the Lodge never became a soldier, he was trained as a young boy in cavalry combat in order to participate in the family legacy. Not only could he shoot from horseback, but Lodge's father also hired a former Austrian soldier to teach Lodge how to use a broad sword.[408] The significance of the Cabot Lodge family history was so

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[406] Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States 1880-1917*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 17.

[407] Lodge, *Early Memories*, 87.

[408] Ibid., 87-88.

pervasive in the young man's mind that Lodge felt he needed to train for combat in order to continue on this legacy should the opportunity present itself. Sport was not enough; Lodge had been exposed to the glorification of war as a boy and it shaped him into a young man who sought manliness through combat. Greenberg has noted that the relaxed life of the upper classes in the late nineteenth century created a need for young men to express their martial manhood. The pattern for that need developed from the hyper masculinity of national politics during the expansionist period of the mid-1800s.[409] In this way, Lodge endeavored to transform himself into the Cooperian model of the military aristocrat which was the upper-class soldier Slotkin described as the defender of American ideals.[410] Living within a culture that highlighted combat and physicality indicated that the praise of the hero soldier had survived several generations. This praise of the soldier combined with the political climate of the nation during the 1860s to create a crucial moment in Lodge's life where he sought to be part of the glory of war.

War was not only a glorification of physicality and violence but it also signified the patriotic nature of a man particularly throughout the Civil War. Though the Cabot and Lodge families had initially identified as Whigs, the issue of slavery pushed the Lodge men away from their party.[411] Instead, they joined the free-soilers, not simply out of a hatred for slavery but an avid interest in the expanding frontier. Once the Republican Party was formed based upon this premise, the Lodge men joined the party.[412] When the

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[409] Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood*, 280-281.

[410] Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment*, 104-105.

[411] Lodge, *Early Memories*, 88.

[412] Ibid., 113.

Civil War broke out in 1861, the idea of war captivated Lodge and the thought that the glory he had craved as a boy might be realized. Though he was only fifteen years old, Lodge wanted to be among those fighting for glory on the battlefield,

> I at once determined that I would enlist as a drummer, for I had gathered from my reading that such was the proper and conventional thing for a boy to do, and I pictured to myself the feats of gallantry I would perform as we made a victorious charge, for all the charges which I intended making with my regiment were to be victorious…My plans for a military life, however, were not taken in either a favorable or even a serious spirit by my family, and I had to content myself with imagining desperate assaults and gallant exploits, from which I always escaped alive and glorious, a soothing exercise in which I frequently indulged, generally just before I dropped to sleep for the night.[413]

Lodge had no concept of the dangers or realities of war. He drew his knowledge of war from the legends of his family and their stories of wars past. Lodge also used the play war tactics and combat skills that he learned from his riding instructor to form a general concept of war. Slotkin argued that this praise of militarism became a characteristic of the American hero throughout the nineteenth century.[414] Hoganson stated that the Civil War, in particular, was heavily romanticized focusing on the glory of masculinity and bravery rather than reality.[415] The realities of war articulated by those who had served devastated this glorification of war according to Greenberg.[416] For Lodge, who remained on the outside of the battle, it was a conflict of epic proportions. The young boy's sense of militarism came from both his literary education and his familial ideology. War was a

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[413] Ibid., 118.

[414] Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment*, 500.

[415] Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood*, 201-202.

[416] Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood*, 274-275.

method by which Lodge could prove his patriotism as well as manliness just as George Cabot had done during the Revolutionary War. Militarism was a rite of passage in Lodge's mind and this would continue to be his perception later in life. However, as was the case with many upper-class young men, Lodge's family prevented the young man from going to war and he remained detached from the heroic legacy he desperately craved. The bitter disappointment in this missed opportunity forced Lodge to engage in activities that would satiate his desire to express his manliness.

In order to appease himself of the urge to fight and thereby express his masculinity, Lodge engaged in vigorous exercise and war games in order to live with the burden of not being allowed to fight in the Civil War. Lodge's account exemplified the trend recounted by Bederman in which parents encouraged exercise in order to control their sons' war-like impulses.[417] Consequently, the physicality Lodge experienced in place of war continued to be his perception of war well into his adult life. Lodge established a connection between manliness, physicality, and war. Yet, Lodge's experience was not unique; his would be one of many that would culminate in a culture desperate for war in order to display the manliness that they had been denied with the growth of industrialism.[418] This denial of the experience of war would deepen the Lodge's conviction of the idea of physicality and war as he matured, "The war left me, as I think it left those of my time generally with profound convictions which nothing can

[417] Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization,* 11.

[418] Ibid., 17-18.

ever shake."[419] This vehemence for masculinity would be deepened by Lodge's higher education as the young man developed into a promising professional.

Harvard was where Lodge combined his affinity for the American frontier with the skills that would later make him a powerful politician. Lodge expounded on his love for legends by deepening his research into historical subjects that focused on conquest and the glorification of heroes. He gravitated toward the study of the early Christian kingdoms of Europe as well as the history of the American colonies.[420] As a graduate student, Lodge's fascination with early American history created a knowledge base from which to develop a career in politics.

In 1872, Lodge returned to Harvard after the completion of his Bachelor's degree and entered the law school, though his intention was not to become a lawyer but rather to continue studying history, and expand his knowledge of American legends. In particular, Lodge studied the European roots of American law.[421] Only two years later, Lodge passed the bar exam.[422] Lodge continued his education, despite already having earned an advanced degree. In his post-graduate studies, he worked under Henry Adams, the great-grandson of the second president, who shaped his view of American history.[423] Under Adam's tutelage, Lodge turned his fascination with heroes and conquest into a career as an American historian.

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[419] Lodge, *Early Memories*, 125-126.

[420] Ibid.,185-186.

[421] Ibid., 246.

[422] Charles Stuart Groves, *Henry Cabot Lodge: The Statesman*, (New York: Maynard Company, 1925), 8.

[423] Ibid.

Lodge began to formulate his own perceptions about the heroic traits embodied by American settlers to further mythologize the history of the nation. The development of his analytical skills came from a mixture of course work as well as professional development under his mentor. Lodge gained a position as assistant editor of the *North American Review* through Adams, who was the editor of the journal.[424] In 1875, Lodge became a lecturer at Harvard and maintained this position for three years.[425] With an extensive knowledge of both European and American history, Lodge began considering the cultural themes present in both.

Lodge concluded that the roots of Anglo-Saxon culture that the United States had maintained allowed Americans to create their own heroic legacy.[426] This mirrored the racial and masculine ideas of superiority as described by Slotkin who argued that during the era of Jacksonian expansion, writers mythologized the Anglo-Saxon roots of the American people as the source of superior culture and fighting proficiency.[427] Greenberg concurred stating that novels and politicians alike promoted the Anglo-Saxon as the dominant race in the latter half of the nineteenth century.[428] Lodge, however, took a slightly different approach. He used his higher education to support these claims, which constituted him as an active myth creator. Lodge fully developed this idea of a legacy of racial superiority under the tutelage of Henry Adams in his post-graduate seminar course on American legal history. Adams emphasized in his lectures that Anglo-Saxon practices

[424] Lodge, *Early Memories*, 244.

[425] Ibid., 267.

[426] Ibid., 264.

[427] Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment*, 231-233.

[428] Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood*, 270.

and English common law were the basis for the legal practices in the United States. As the culmination of his post-graduate seminar, Adams compiled essays from his students, which created a narrative tracing the origins of American law through Anglo-Saxon tradition.[429] Lodge's essay reflected his belief that the tradition of conquest, the warrior spirit, and even racial superiority stemmed from Anglo-Saxon culture including their legal practices.

By attributing the fundamental culture to a warrior tradition, Lodge sought to legitimize the American frontiersman as a hero. The themes Lodge included in his analysis were violence, masculinity, and race – premises that he later described as the attributes of the frontiersman.[430] Lodge's essay, and later his thesis, "The Anglo-Saxon Land Law," argued that the legal customs of the Anglo-Saxon people derived from early Germanic tribal law and evolved over time with the inclusion of more modern societal practices.[431] The most important of these developments, Lodge argued, was the isolation of Anglo-Saxon culture from the rest of Europe. Thus, "…the great principles of Anglo-Saxon law, ever changing and assimilating, have survived in the noblest work of the race — the English common law."[432] Lodge described the societal and legal development as the result of a superior race isolated from the impurities of other societies. Slotkin stated

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[429] David M. Rabban, *Law's History: American Legal Thought and the Transatlantic Turn to History*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 173-174.

[430] Lodge revisited these themes in several of his works discussing the legacy of the frontiersman including *A Frontier Town and Other Essays* as well as *Hero Tales from American History* which he co-wrote with Theodore Roosevelt.

[431] Henry Cabot Lodge, "The Anglo-Saxon Land Law," in *Essays in Anglo-Saxon Law*, ed. Henry Adams, (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1876), 55-56. Lodge mentions that the essay reproduced in Adams' complied work was the same essay he presented as his thesis for which he received his Ph.D. Lodge, *Early Memories*, 263.

[432] Lodge, "The Anglo-Saxon Land Law," 56.

that this belief of an isolated race developing a superior culture of both violence and civility was common among historians of the mid-nineteenth century.[433] Bederman has argued that many Americans believed the lineage of Anglo-Saxon heritage within the British Empire meant that Anglo-American society was based on a long line of expansive empires.[434]

Accordingly, Lodge argued in his essay that it was violence that perpetuated this culture. He stated that through conquest the Anglo-Saxon people not only maintained the identity of their families but also maintained their culture.[435] This notion of the regeneration of culture was similarly addressed by Slotkin in describing the conquest of the frontier as a regenerative process for American culture.[436] Lodge was part of the literary movement that led to the mythologized version of the frontiersman as he began with the foundation of the nation's culture. In this analysis, Lodge located the roots of American culture and the themes of the frontier myth in an older society in order to legitimize the legendary status of America. However, this was not just the perception that Lodge received under Adam's instruction during his time as a graduate student, it was a concept that remained with him throughout his lifetime. Lodge later argued that the implementation of an ancient and bold culture onto new territory led to success in

[433] Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment*, 230-23-1.

[434] Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*, 60-62.

[435] Lodge, "The Anglo-Saxon Land Law," 80-81.

[436] Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence*, 268-269.

conquering the continent.[437] Lodge's work as a graduate student served as the basis for him to further develop his concept of the American hero.

In 1876, he was one of the first men to receive his Ph.D. in history from Harvard as well as a law degree.[438] As an instructor, Lodge developed a strong knowledge of frontier history along with his skills as a speaker. He would use the credentials, social connections, and knowledge gained during his time at Harvard to draw attention to the importance of the frontier in the development of the United States. The skills and knowledge that Lodge gained during his time at Harvard helped to develop him into an educated politician who used American history to promote expansionist policies.

Consequently, upon entering politics, Lodge used his intellectual background to engage his audience by offering an alternative to the industrial life of the North, that is, a return to the mythologized life of the frontier. When Lodge stepped onto the political stage in 1879, he had an ideological view of his beloved state, which he relayed into his campaign. By the late 1870s, industrialization had transformed New England into a commercial center filled with sizeable class divisions and Catholic immigrants; it was at this time that Lodge began his political career.[439] This environment was nothing like the world he had envisioned as a child and studied as a young man. Consequently, the frontier myth allowed Lodge to address the problems of an industrial world and offer a return to a model of colonial New England. Lodge's model would return his cherished

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[437] Henry Cabot Lodge, "Certain Principles of Town Government," in *A Frontier Town and Other Essays*, (New York, 1906), 231.

[438] William Widenor, *Henry Cabot Lodge and the Search for an American Foreign Policy, (Berkeley: University of California Press*, 1983), 1.

[439] Ibid., 45.

state of Massachusetts to a Protestant Anglo-Saxon society based on the agricultural practices that had historically defined the region.[440] Lodge's rhetoric attempted to move his constituents away from the changes to American society and toward a cultural ideology that glorified the past.

In an area that had been drastically transformed by industrialization, Lodge's ideas of returning to a glorious past were appealing. In 1880, only a year after Lodge left Harvard, he was elected to the House of Representatives in his home state of Massachusetts.[441] After barely winning his first election, Lodge managed to become the chairman of the Massachusetts Republican Party for only a year between 1883 and 1884.[442] Lodge relied on his knowledge of the area's history to compose speeches that appealed to the voting population and, in particular, the upper class. As a man of wealth and high social standing, Lodge belonged to several social clubs in which he used his fascination with the frontier and its history to further his political career.[443] Lodge promoted the idea of returning to the frontier in order to reclaim the lost glory and the cultural integrity of the nation.

The legacy of the frontiersman was not a myth to Lodge; he regarded it as a practical solution to the problems of the industrialized nation in the 1880s. Returning to the frontier lifestyle was about recreating an idealized past, a sentiment that Lodge employed to his political advantage in engaging with the upper class. In a speech at the

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[440] Ibid.

[441] Groves, *Henry Cabot Lodge: The Statesman*, 10.

[442] Ibid., 14.

[443] Widenor, *Henry Cabot Lodge and the Search for an American Foreign Policy,* 44.

annual dinner for the New England Society of New York in 1884, Lodge highlighted the lifestyle of the Puritan settlers of New England as the ideal American way of life.

Lodge argued that a return to the frontier was a practical solution to the problems facing the working classes.[444] The issues that Lodge addressed were the results of the overcrowding of industrial cities in Massachusetts due to the flood of people from both the countryside and foreign lands. He stated that the results of this migration was poorer city conditions, wage deficiencies, and food shortages.[445] Lodge's solution was one that echoed the speeches of decades past – settling the countryside and focusing on an agricultural lifestyle. He proposed it as his mission to encourage "emigration from our-overcrowded cities to the lands of the West."[446] The significance of Lodge using the frontier as a solution to the problems of the industrial age demonstrates not only the acquired historical knowledge of his developmental years but also the beginning of his use of the frontier in his political rhetoric.

Emigration to the countryside promoted not only moving west but also a way back to the cultural ideology that Lodge associated with the frontier including its conceptions of race and religion. The Puritan society that Lodge referred to was a past that highlighted the Anglo-Protestant society in which he had grown up, one that Slotkin argued epitomized the legends of white Protestant superiority highlighted in the dime

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[444] Ibid., 17.

[445] Henry Cabot Lodge, "Independent Spirit of the Puritans," 1884 in *Speeches*, ed. Henry Cabot Lodge (New York: Houghton, Miffling, and Company, 1892), 9.

[446] Ibid.

novels of the late nineteenth century.[447] Greenberg has stated that the Puritan model was a prime example of the writers of an American romanticism that revolved around expansion.[448] Lodge appropriated the legendary status of the Puritan within American mythology and turned it into his political platform. His rhetoric focused on building a society based on the culture of the past while also promoting his own political advancement.

A leader was required to return Massachusetts to its glorious past. Lodge stated that man internalized the values of the frontiersman, "Before they enter in, let them take to themselves only the high self-respecting spirit of the Puritan, but also fighting qualities, his dogged persistence, and another attribute for which he was not so conspicuous - plenty of good nature."[449] Lodge took the qualities of religious devotion from the Puritans and combined them with martial manhood to create a heroic image of a leader. Greenberg argues that the image of the Puritan involved religious piety above all else.[450] However, Slotkin stated that aggressive manhood and religious piety were not mutually exclusive and, in fact, much of the literature concerning Puritans reflected instances of violence as well as religious piety.[451] Such was the case for Lodge and by his reckoning the embodiment of both attributes signified true leadership. Though Lodge could not insert himself into a combat role in order to fulfill the image of the

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[447] Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment*, 54-55. Lodge would use negative rhetoric particularly toward immigrant groups and Catholics who he thought threatened America's return to the glorious lifestyle of the frontier. This was most evident in the election of 1894.

[448] Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood*, 20-21.

[449] Lodge, "Independent Spirit of the Puritans," in *Speeches,* 7.

[450] Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood*, 20.

[451] Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment*, 275.

frontiersman, he reattributed the quality to politics. Hoganson stated that by the late nineteenth century politics had become a cult of manliness as it promoted fraternalism and leadership. This was mainly the belief of the upper classes who did not have the opportunity to engage in warfare as a means of expressing their masculinity much like the soldier aristocrat.[452] In that same year Lodge would meet one of the most influential people in his life and political career who would strengthen his view on the frontier and masculinity; this man was Theodore Roosevelt.

Initially, the two men only knew each other by name through the social circles of which both men were a part during the 1880s. However, during the Republican Convention of 1884, both fought for the presidential nomination of Senator George Edmunds of Vermont over James Blaine from Maine.[453] Though both were speakers on behalf of Edmunds, it was Blaine who won the Republican nomination. From this mutual experience the two formed a friendship that would span the rest of their lives, and which was forged in their shared respect for American history and the frontier.[454] Roosevelt's boisterous approach to politics as well as his personal mission to live the life of a frontiersman complemented Lodge's more academic approach. Hoganson has presented Roosevelt as the active example of martial manhood, unafraid of embracing military experience in order to embrace the legacy of the frontier.[455] In contrast, Lodge was a wealthy man who promoted the ideas of manliness from the safety and comfort of his

[452] Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood*, 25-26.

[453] Lawrence, *Henry Cabot Lodge,* 104.

[454] Ibid.

[455] Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood,* 38.

estate.[456] Though the two men each represented a different approach to masculinity and the growing American empire, their friendship was proof that the two were not mutually exclusive. Additionally, the pair displayed the ways in which the call to embrace martial masculinity emanated from the wealthy and privileged. Together Lodge and Roosevelt sought a new frontier through imperial conquest and gathered support by connecting imperialistic actions to the frontier myth.

The necessity of utilizing the frontier myth arose from the need to expand the American market and further U.S. trade. The industrialization that Lodge had fought in his early political career was also changing the economic landscape of the country. The export capabilities of the United States made it a competitive nation among other global trading powers such as Britain.[457] American trading power was the result of interests in foreign markets since the 1850s as well as the productive power of the large factory towns of the Eastern seaboard. The access that American businessmen had to raw materials in places such as China and Korea also kept production costs low.[458] Controlling these territories through intimidation became an easier way to access raw materials as well as transport goods.[459] However, using the same methods as the U.S.'s former oppressor was not good for the public image. Therefore, the idea of imperial expansion had to be "rebranded" for the American public. Consequently, the frontier

[456] Ibid., 148.

[457] Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860-1898*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1963), 23-24.

[458] Ibid., 30.

[459] Ibid., 60.

myth served as a veneer that hid imperialist actions by making them appear to be continuation of the process that had helped to develop the nation.

Lodge used the frontier myth to explain the nation's desire to expand into overseas territories. In 1886, Lodge entered national politics and became the Representative of the Massachusetts sixth district providing him with the platform from which to express expansionist ideas.[460] One particular speech in which Lodge's employment of the frontier myth was evident occurred at the annual dinner of the New England Society of Brooklyn. This was a social club frequented by the social elite who were invested in the economic development of the country but also facing the crisis in masculinity. Lodge spoke at the club's annual Forefather's Day Dinner in which the men of the society celebrated their New England lineage and, hence, the lineage of the nation. The speech incorporated the celebration of the frontier legacy of the nation while also addressing the nation's future as a continual process of conquering new frontiers.

To begin the speech, Lodge spoke of the legacy of the nation stemming from the Puritan colonies of New England connecting this to the expansion of the nation across the continent. He constructed the image of the conquering of the frontier as a legacy of American culture.

> We pass out of the eager, bustling present and are once more in touch with the strong race which clung to the rocky coast until they made it their own, and whose children and whose children's children have forced their way across the continent, carrying with them the principles and the

[460] Groves, *Henry Cabot Lodge: The Statesman*, 17.

> beliefs of the forefathers. The Pilgrim and the Puritan whom we honor tonight were men who did great work in the world.[461]

Lodge used the image of the Puritans and the settlement of the frontier in this speech to fashion an image that invoked the legacy of the United States. He emphasized that this was done through the conquest of the continent. This legacy, however, had limitations. Lodge described these heroic settlers as white Protestant males who had a divine destiny. He drew on the divine nature of expansion in which Slotkin argued that depictions of the Puritans acknowledged violence as a necessary means to the expansion of the frontier and God's work.[462] This legacy of the frontiersman did not incorporate other races or religions that had been assimilated into the nation. Those who symbolized the frontier myth, and subsequently imperialism, were still Protestant white men.

By addressing the cultural elements bound to the frontier, Lodge showed that the legacy of the myth still maintained exclusivity, namely that of race. In addition, Lodge emphasized the gender of the settlers in order to connect the crisis of masculinity being experienced by the upper class to a glorious past of conquest. Hoganson has argued that the wealthiest members of society addressed the masculine crisis by drawing on stories of the frontiersmen for inspiration on how to remedy the loss of masculinity.[463] According to Greenberg, this was accomplished through violence, which the nation appeared to have considered the solution to national problems since the Civil War.[464] By

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[461] Henry Cabot Lodge, "The Day We Celebrate," 1888, in *Speeches,* ed. Henry Cabot Lodge, (New York: Hought, Mifflin, and Company, 1892), 44.

[462] Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence*, 275.

[463] Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood*, 12.

[464] Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood*, 272.

the 1880s, this included the need to revitalize the nation's manhood.[465] Yet, Lodge's speech was not just a tale of the glorious past; it was organized to address the continuation of this legacy through the conquest of a new frontier. He would continue to offer conquest as a solution to the crisis of American manhood in addition to its economic problems.

The year of this speech, Republican nominee Benjamin Harrison ran against the incumbent president, Grover Cleveland. One of Harrison's key issues was the revival of the navy in order to protect American economic interests overseas.[466] Lodge supported this idea covertly, "It is the American policy never to meddle in the affairs of other nations, but to see to it that our attitude toward the rest of the world is dignified, and that our flag is respected in every corner of the earth, and backed by a navy which shall be an honor to the American name."[467] Though this statement begins with a cautionary statement designed to dissuade the audience from regarding him as an imperialist, Lodge went on to explain his idea of a naval-based empire.

The then congressman claimed that the goal of the United States should be to earn the respect of every nation. While ostensibly this does not seem a severe statement, the respect that Lodge sought was naval enforcement. This statement was reminiscent of Commodore Perry's journey to Japan in 1852, which occurred in Lodge's lifetime. Though the objective had been, officially, to open up trade with Japan, the navy had also ensured a mutual respect existed between the two nations by placing gunships in Edo

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[465] Ibid., 280

[466] Pletcher, *The Diplomacy of Involvement: American Economic Expansion Across the Pacific, 1784-1900*, 86-87.

[467] Henry Cabot Lodge, "The Day We Celebrate," in *Speeches*, 47.

Bay. This tactic of gunboat diplomacy that had begun when Lodge was just a boy proved to be a useful tactic for attaining an American foothold in various lands across the ocean and that would assist in extending the trade and political influence of the United States.[468]

In the late 1880s, Lodge's appeal for respect for the American flag would be taken a step further and an economic empire would begin to form. One of the territories that the United States sought to obtain was the island of Hawaii. The British had once controlled the trade from the islands but did not formally control the islands. By the latter half of the 1800s, the growing U.S. market caused Hawaii's trade relations to be mainly focused on the United States. Accordingly, Hawaii became an increasingly vital aspect in U.S. economic growth placing it firmly in the sights of the imperialists.

Through diplomatic pressure, the United States gained sole access to Hawaii's sugar cultivation in 1875.[469] This remained a duty-free agreement in which the United States was allowed to control some land for sugar plantations, and in return Hawaii gained access to the sugar market in U.S. trade. By 1887, the King of Hawaii had signed most of his power over to American politicians and businessmen by agreeing to the Constitution of Hawaii.[470] These Anglo-American men formed a provincial government in Hawaii to protect the interests of the United States thereby creating an oligarchy. At the same time, the British still had trade agreements with the Kingdom of Hawaii that

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[468] It is important to note that Henry Cabot Lodge pressed for this speech and others like it to be published. These speeches were not only meant to impact the social elite, though persuading them would be beneficial to Lodge's cause, rather they were meant to be published so that these ideas might be spread to a national audience. At the time of this publication, 1892, Lodge was running for the Senate on an expansionist platform and used his published speeches as another way to reach the public. Lawrence, *Henry Cabot Lodge: A Biography,* 45-47.

[469] Tom Coffman, *Island Edge of America*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2012), xiii.

[470] Ibid., 20.

posed a threat to the American control of Hawaii.[471] In order to prevent another imperial power from taking over Hawaii, U.S. businessmen and politicians established the Committee of Safety, and in 1893, overthrew Queen Liliuokalani in order to take full control of the island.[472] The Anglo-American seizure of Hawaii signified that, despite the change in circumstances, the new American frontier was still very much one divided by race. Slotkin argued that the Cooperian model of the frontier represented race as a hallmark of moral and intellectual capabilities. Within such an ideology, being an Indian meant that one was a savage and lacked the intellectual capacity to live in the modern world.[473] Both Queen Liliuokalani's race and gender made her a threat to the cultural superiority that Lodge sought to defend. Despite her ability to make trade agreements with other western countries, Americans regarded the queen as having limited intellectual abilities and leadership capabilities. The American businessmen in Hawaii, therefore, considered their claim to the territory to be stronger. This coup did not occur, however, without heavy resistance from the local native population; for several years the provisional U.S.-based government would have to manage repercussions from Hawaiian natives.

Lodge also served on the Committee of Foreign Relations at the time of the Wilcox rebellion in 1895. The uprising began as a group of loyalists to the Hawaiian

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[471] Ralph S. Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom: 1874-1893, the Kalakaua Dynasty*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1967), 453.

[472] Ibid., 541.

[473] Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment*, 100-101.

queen conspired to launch an armed rebellion against the territorial government.[474] Lodge addressed Congress about this rebellion in a reactionary speech on January 19, 1895. In this speech, Lodge spoke in favor of annexing Hawaii in order to protect the island and its citizens. While it seemed that the well-being of the people was his initial concern, the speech quickly turned into a means of presenting an imperialist rhetoric.

Lodge began by addressing the concerns he had regarding removing Admiral Walker and his warship from Pearl Harbor. He stated that by not maintaining a military presence in Hawaii the rebellion had been able to form.[475] The Senator also said that while the U.S. forces withdrew from Hawaii, the British and Japanese maintained their presence on the island, which could give rise to outside support for the rebels.[476] Lodge used the threat of other imperial powers in Hawaii as motivation for more prompt imperialist action.

After addressing the threats and concerns regarding the developments in Hawaii, Lodge characteristically altered his speech to reflect his imperial ambitions and the legacy of the American frontier:

> The desire of the American people, without distinction of party, is that we should at least control in those islands; that our institutions should be predominant; that the men of American blood who are administering the government should be sustained, and also I believe, that the islands should become part of the American Republic…It seems to me, in view of the news we have received,

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[474] Ernest Andrade, *Unconquerable Rebel: Robert W. Wilcox and Hawaiian Politics, 1880-1903*, (Niwot: University Press of Colorado, 1996), 154.

[475] Henry Cabot Lodge, "Our Duty Toward Hawaii," in *Speeches and Addresses 1884-1909*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1909), 157-158.

[476] Ibid., 158.

> that the Senate should delay no longer in expressing its honest conviction on the subject.[477]

Not only did Lodge state that taking over the islands was an action agreeable to the American public but, also, that it was one not divided by party lines. While there had been opposition to annexation and the imperialistic actions during the late nineteenth century, Lodge recognized that, unlike the U.S.-Mexican War, opposition was not divided along hard party lines. The face of imperialism had changed since the 1840s and its new mask was the rise of industrial capitalism. Nevertheless, many of the themes from the frontier rhetoric of the 1840s prevail in Lodge's speech.

Lodge began this part of his speech by declaring that the institutions of the United States should be preserved. Similarly to the rhetoric regarding bringing civilization to the populations of the Southwest before the U.S.-Mexican War, Lodge proclaimed the spread of American institutions as a method of developing the island. This was not simply maintaining control over U.S. industry, but rather a complete occupation of the island's structure. Greenberg argued that in the same way that Mexicans were considered to be Indians so too were the Hawaiians. They were considered to be uncivilized, vulnerable, and in need of American principles.[478] Lodge spoke of ensuring, "that the men of American blood who are administering the government should be sustained…"[479] The first part of the statement argued that only Anglo-Americans were fit to govern the island of Hawaii. The native Hawaiians were regarded as unable to govern themselves owing to racial inferiority. Lodge's assessment of Hawaii exceeded the racial

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[477] Ibid., 161-162.

[478] Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood*, 239-241.

[479] Lodge, "Our Duty Toward Hawaii," in *Speeches and Addresses,* 161.

paternalism described by Slotkin.[480] It emphasized the importance of male leadership, which Hoganson has argued was a volatile issue at the time as many politicians felt the role of men was under attack with the rising presence of women in politics.[481] This is of particular importance given that the Hawaiian rebels were attempting to replace the U.S. authority with a native queen.

The attempt to return Queen Liliuokalani to power in Hawaii was considered a direct threat to American masculinity and the Anglo-Saxon race. A successful coup not only meant that the native, supposedly racially inferior, population would defeat the righteous democratic government, but also that they would do so under the leadership of a woman. This threatened the warlike image of the frontiersman concept while also bringing into question the threat that masculinity faced at home. During the late 1800s, women had begun to assert an increasing presence in the public arena when previously they had historically been confined to the home. However, with the rise of industrialism in the eastern part of the country, more women found jobs in factories, and were entering politics, and even fought for suffrage.[482] The imperial conquests of the United States served as an outlet for the aggressiveness that many associated with manliness.[483] For these conquests to be threatened by a woman would shatter the image of that manliness in the eyes of politicians.

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[480] Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment*, 235.

[481] Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood*, 14.

[482] Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization,* 13.

[483] Ibid., 8.

Hawaii served a symbolic purpose as much as a physical one; the conquest of the islands solidified the powerful image of the frontiersman and, in turn, the American empire. Yet, as crucial as Hawaii was to the development of the modern American frontier, it was only part of a larger imperial mission to secure key positions to expand the capitalist American empire.

The next significant event in the expansion of the United States would truly bring imperial ambition to the forefront of national attention. Chief among the expansionists was Lodge who was provided with the opportunity to express his devotion to the image of the frontiersman. For nearly twenty years, Cuban rebels had fought to expel their Spanish conquerors from the island and establish independence. Though the Spanish Empire was not at its pinnacle, the experience of its officers had proved to be a formidable force on the island by reason of their training and numbers.[484] Despite these advantages, by 1895, the Spanish were having little impact on the rebel forces under the direction of Arsenio Martinez-Campos. The majority of the Spanish-held territory on the island was concentrated around the urban centers where there were fortifications and resources.[485] However, due to the inability of General Martinez-Campos to crush the rebellion once and for all, the Spanish government decided to send another officer who was willing to win the war by any means necessary – Valeriano Weyler.

General Weyler sought to quell the Cuban rebels by cutting off their supply chains. The methods included moving citizens from the countryside to urban centers,

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[484] John Lawrence Tone, *War and Genocide in Cuba, 1895-1898*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2006), 9.

[485] Ibid., 113-114.

physically beating those who were suspected of aiding Cuban rebels, and creating concentration camps in the latter half of 1896.[486] This led to massive starvation among the Cuban people.[487] Weyler's plans also halted tobacco production on the island, which was a profitable crop particularly for the U.S. businessmen who had large investments in the production of tobacco. Weyler even went as far as banning tobacco from being exported to the United States in an effort to stop the profits from falling into the hands of the rebels.[488] Despite the general's plan to attempt to cut off U.S. support to the rebels, several groups in the U.S. were following Weyler's activities in Cuba. In New York, Tomas Estrada Palmas had already been part of a Cuban rebel support group named the Junta, working to feed the stories of Weyler's exploits to the U.S. media in addition to building relationships with prominent American politicians.[489] In addition to this media campaign, a strong social campaign focused on connecting Junta supporter Gonzalo de Queseda with powerful politicians in an effort to influence the U.S. Congress to intervene. Of these politicians, none was more important than Henry Cabot Lodge. Consequently, Gonzalo de Queseda and Lodge met on several occasions at elite social events.[490] Lodge's activities in the years leading up to the Spanish-American War ranged from the public display of politics he was involved in as a senator, to relationships with

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[486] Valeriano Weyler, *Reconstruction Order*, October 21, 1896, quoted in *Understanding U.S. Military Conflict through Primary Sources*, vol. 2, ed. James R. Arnold and Roberta Wiener, (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO Books, 2016), 279.

[487] Tone, *War and Genocide in Cuba,* 193-194.

[488] Ibid., 162.

[489] Philip S. Foner, *The Spanish-Cuban-American War and the Birth of American Imperialism* 1895-1902, (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972), 167.

[490] Gonzalo de Quesada, *Archivo de Gonzalo de Quesada*, vol. 2, ed. A. Muñiz, (Havana: Imprenta El Siglo XX, 1951), 33.

Cuban rebels, to promoting American imperialism at exclusive social clubs. The senator was a key player in the nation's thrust toward imperial conquest.

As the atrocities of General Wyler became known to the public, cries for intervention in Cuba began to increase. Lodge used these atrocities to his advantage and adjusted his rhetoric to highlight the needs of the Cuban people while covertly mentioning the territorial ambitions of the United States. In the events leading up to the outbreak of war, Henry Cabot Lodge served on the Foreign Relations Committee.[491] In 1896, Lodge addressed Congress in order to enact President McKinley's request to intervene in Cuba.[492] While the speech began with sympathetic language aimed at helping the Cuban people, the rhetoric quickly changed to that of imperial power.

Amidst the details of how the Cuban people had suffered at the hands of the Spanish, Lodge brought up the personal investment that the American people had in the island. Though he opened his speech with the details of the cruelties of the Spanish Empire, Lodge inserted conspicuous rhetoric that is fundamentally imperialistic. In initially requesting Congress approve the measure, Lodge stated:

> The President has asked us to mail his arm to strike with the Army and Navy of the United States; to authorize him to go down into Cuba and enforce the pacification of the island. He has asked us to authorize him to set up a government there which shall be a stable government, and a government 'capable of observing international obligations.'[493]

The objective of the intervention was more than simply pushing the Spanish out of Cuba it was a takeover of the Cuban government in order to establish a new government.

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[491] Henry Cabot Lodge, "Intervention in Cuba: April 13, 1896," in *Speeches and Addresses 1884-1909*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1909), 297.

[492] Ibid.

[493] Ibid., 301.

Lodge's speech went beyond racial paternalism and directly into imperialism rather than presenting a mission of goodwill. Slotkin argued that paternalism was the reconstruction of racial, social, and political values as concepts to create a power system.[494] According to Bederman, jingoists regarded paternalism as benevolent and a mark of Christian goodwill toward all people.[495] Lodge's assessment of Cuba in 1896 gave the United States both power and racial superiority while portraying their conquest as benevolent. By this logic, Lodge presumed that the United States had the right to intervene in Cuba. Yet there was more to intervention in Cuba; it would also mean the construction of a U.S. controlled government similar to the oligarchy of the Hawaiian government.

Lodge also addressed economic investment and the sense of ownership that the United States already felt regarding Cuba. He stated, "We cannot longer suffer our commerce to be ruined, our property destroyed, our business to be darkened and depressed."[496] This part of Lodge's speech sat adjacent to the appeal to fight for the wellbeing of the Cuban people. Lodge treated the suffering of the Cuban people under General Weyler with the same concern as he showed to the property damage to American businesses in Cuba. He indicated that the monetary damage that the United States had suffered through the U.S. held property on the island was enough of a premise for war. This was not the language of someone interested in the benefit of the people but rather someone looking out for the economic interests of the United States while using the atrocities in Cuba to serve as a premise for intervention.

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[494] Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment*, 140.

[495] Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*, 113-114.

[496] Lodge, "Intervention in Cuba: April 13, 1896," in *Speeches and Addresses,* 306.

Lodge's demand for protection of the Cuban people was still not enough, however, for the president to declare war. Not all of the Republican Party adhered to the warmongering laws of masculinity that Lodge or Roosevelt did. As Hoganson noted, McKinley's strength was not in the call for martial action like so many in his party but rather in the restraint to continue negotiating for peace.[497] The president's actions exemplified Greenberg's interpretation of restrained manhood in which McKinley fought against military intervention.[498] For his resistance to war, McKinley's patriotism and masculinity were criticized.[499] President McKinley avoided entering the war for as long as possible because he believed the rebellion in Cuba could be resolved peacefully. McKinley attempted to negotiate with the Spanish government throughout 1897 in order to institute reforms that would allow Cuba to have greater control over local government as well as more representation in Madrid.[500] The rebels, however, refused to agree to the terms and instead insisted that the only resolution to the conflict was complete independence.[501] Lodge himself still argued for the nation to be prepared for war even if it meant that the president did not yet agree to intervention. Fortunately for Lodge, he had become close friends with President McKinley over their years together in politics.

Lodge was able to convince McKinley that the man most qualified to help build up the Navy as Assistant Secretary of that department was none other than his friend

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[497] Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood*, 80-81.

[498] Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood*, 271.

[499] Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood*, 81-82.

[500] Henry Cabot Lodge, *The War with Spain*, (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishing, 1899), 25-26.

[501] Ibid.

Theodore Roosevelt.[502] Though his title deemed him assistant to the Secretary of the Navy, John D. Long, who had the title, was a sickly man who was consistently unable to fulfill the duties of his position. Roosevelt did not hesitate to take it upon himself to carry out these duties which helped develop the U.S. Navy.[503] In combination with Lodge's network of friends in high places the events in Cuba pushed the United States toward the brink of war with Spain.

The principal discussion of masculinity for Lodge and many others began with a preventative action in which the United States sought to protect its assets by military means. When none of McKinley's actions appeared to be working, the *USS Maine* was sent to Havana Harbor on a peace keeping mission.[504] On February 15, 1898, an explosion sank the Maine in the early hours of the morning. The incident was made worse by the Spanish government denying any involvement in the sinking of the ship.[505] Though the president launched a full investigation into the incident, no immediate retaliation occurred. [506] Lodge was one of many that exhorted the president to react to the disrespect demonstrated by the Spanish government: "On the other hand, an equally overwhelming majority were determined that there should be atonement for the *Maine*, and that the Spanish rule in Cuba — which had caused the destruction of the ship — and

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[502] Lewis L. Gould, *The Spanish American War and President McKinley*, (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1982), 9.

[503] Ibid., 38-39.

[504] "Maine Destroyed by an Outside Naval Attack Officers Believe," *New York Journal*, February 15, 1898, extra No. 9, Crucible of Empire Collection, Public Broadcasting Station Digital Archives, accessed June 14, 2017, https://www.pbs.org/crucible/tl10.html.

[505] Ibid.

[506] William McKinley to the U.S. Senate, April 10, 1898, *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1895-1925*, vol. 14, ed., James D. Richardson, (New York: Bureau of National Literature, 1925), 6290-6291.

the horrors of the "reconcentrados" should end."[507] Lodge's attitude reflected the sentiment that the attack on an American ship was an attack on America itself and, therefore, an action that required an immediate response. This reaction from Lodge was much like his response to the Wilcox rebellion in Hawaii: it was an attack on the American character. Hoganson argued that the destruction of the *Maine* was a direct attack on the masculinity of the nation that expansionists argued was cause for retaliation.[508] Slotkin has stated that engaging in such violence was regarded as a method of regenerating culture and American values as depicted in the novels of John Filson. These novels depict the growth and development of American culture as a series of events that follow a pattern of movement west, a struggle for land control, and the building of Anglo-American society in the former wilderness. Filson's novels showed that this expansion westward cemented a culture of bravery and manliness into American culture.[509] With the country still in a crisis of masculinity, the war with Spain sought to solve this by allowing the Americans to display their masculinity. Additionally, Filson's novels represent a cycle of violent regeneration over the course of American history. As Lodge had said in his statement, it was an inevitable outcome of two cultures colliding over a territory.[510] The senator saw the conflict with Spain as part of the cycle of

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[507] Henry Cabot Lodge, "The Spanish American War," *Harper's Monthly Magazine*, March 1898, no. 636, vol. 98, in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine: Volume 98,* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1899), 505.

[508] Hoganson*, Fighting for American Manhood*, 70-71.

[509] Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence*, 268-269.

[510] Lodge, "The Spanish American War," *Harper's Monthly Magazine*, March 1898, in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine: Volume 98,* 509.

American growth. The attack on the *Maine* merely served as the catalyst to propel the nation toward war.

While the public image of the war focused on Cuba, the expansionists in favor of the war prepared for further territorial expansion while talking about the integrity of the United States. Ten days after the attack on the *Maine*, Roosevelt used his authority to order Commodore Dewey to Hong Kong in a preemptive move to strike the Philippines if war broke out.[511] Though the conflict had been particularly focused on Cuba up until this point, Roosevelt knew that the threat from the Spanish empire could come from both the west and south. He moved his ships to prevent this from happening. However, this action involved more than simply the threat; it was imperial ambition that would reveal itself in the actions taken during the war.

The glory of war portrayed in frontier tales bore little resemblance to actual war. The attitude with regard to the conflict with Spain was described, however, as if it was a heroic tale particularly in reference to masculinity. Between the journalistic call for war and that of members of the Senate, President McKinley finally appealed for a declaration of war on April 20, 1898, and on April 25th Congress passed a joint resolution.[512] Unlike his boyhood dream of going to war, Lodge remained in his government position while his dearest friend Roosevelt resigned his position in order to take command of a volunteer regiment on May 6, 1898.[513] Roosevelt embraced this

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[511] Kenneth E. Hendrickson, *The Spanish American War*, (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2003), 104.

[512] *H.R. 10086 Declaration of War with Spain, 1898*, April 25, 1898, U.S. Senate Digital Archives, Accessed May 12, 2017, https://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/image/HR10086_Spanish-American-War.htm.

[513] Hendrickson, *The Spanish American War* 104.

opportunity to take an active role in conquest and, consequently, his martial manhood.[514] Yet, Lodge also embraced his martial manhood in a more passive way in the capital. Hoganson has argued that while political engagement was seen as a form of masculinity, martial masculinity remained the face of the war.[515] Though the two forms of masculinity seemed to be separate, they coexisted with each other just like the relationship between Lodge and Roosevelt.

While Roosevelt was in Cuba, he wrote to Lodge about his experiences during the war. These letters explored how active and passive manhood interacted to further the goals of imperialism. In one particular letter, Lodge presented his goals quite clearly. Though the goal was to end the conflict in Cuba, the war provided a veneer for appropriating the other Spanish holdings. Lodge wrote to Roosevelt:

> We ought to take Porto Rico as we have taken the Philippines and then close in on Cuba. Let us get the outlying first. The Administration I believe to be doing very well and to be following out a large policy. The opposition now comes exclusively from Reed, who is straining every nerve to beat Hawaii, which the Administration is very eager to get on military grounds. I am in strong hopes that the President will act without Congress, but the attitude of the minority in not giving the Administration this important military measure is in the highest degree discreditable.[516]

Written just over a month after Roosevelt left Washington D.C., Lodge's letter suggests that not only was the United States well prepared to seize the Philippines, but in addition due to Roosevelt's preparations, they did not encounter much resistance. His message

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[514] Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood*, 24-25.

[515] Ibid., 25-26

[516] Henry Cabot Lodge to Theodore Roosevelt, May 31, 1898 in *Selections from the Correspondence of Theodore Roosevelt and Henry Cabot Lodge 1884-1918*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925), 302.

also emphasized the imperialistic goals behind military action in the Philippines and Puerto Rico. Lodge did not simply want to hold these islands nor did he want the United States to place them under protective custody. Lodge suggested the United States acquire these islands and maintain possession of them. That was not a course of action taken for the benefit of ending the conflict but rather one of imperial ambition. This idea of taking control of all of these places completed the act of domination that proved the superiority of American manliness. Puerto Rico was not even initially a target of concern at the beginning of the war, yet it offered strategic war and peace time positioning. At the same time, the United States still sought to take complete control of Hawaii for the same reasons. Roosevelt's actions in preparing the United States to seize the Philippines and his participation in the war showed the immediate presence of active masculinity. Lodge's role in helping to direct the war from the senate and with the ear of the president represents a masculinity not as prominent in the frontier myth. Yet, without Lodge the war would have had considerably less momentum. Lodge, however quickly became absorbed in his ambition stating that he hoped President McKinley would use his powers as Commander in Chief to capture these other territories without the approval of Congress in order to gain more direct action. Lodge demonstrated that aggressive masculinity could be used as an excuse to overstep the procedures of American republicanism similar to Polk's actions during the U.S.-Mexican War. The war, however, barely lasted long enough for the president to aggressively assert his power. The legacy of the frontier and its values did, however, continue through the peace treaty signed at the close of the war.

In the resolution to the conflict with Spain, the United States treated the Spanish possessions like territories of the frontier conquered in the past. The nation boasted complete control after asserting its dominance and the native population were second-class citizens subject to the principles of American civilization. Though the army was ill prepared for war, the combination of the improvements to the navy and the state of the Spanish army allowed the United States to conclude the war in just over three months.[517] Within that time, the United States had embarrassed the Spanish military forces and defeated them with regard to every island they possessed in the Western Hemisphere. At the end of the war, U.S. troops occupied not only Cuba but the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and Guam.[518] The United States would retain all of the conquered Spanish possessions as prizes of war. This particular action was met with resistance within the Senate as the anti-imperialist faction began to protest in the debates following the armistice against taking these islands. The resulting document, however, still held true to the imperialistic nature of expansion.

At the war's conclusion, the treaty that was signed encouraged Lodge's desires to embrace frontier traditions. The Treaty of Paris was signed by representatives of Spain and the United States on December 10, 1898. It did not take effect, however, until April 11 of the following year.[519] This was because Congress was unable to come to an agreement about the terms of Spain's surrender particularly on the issue of Spanish territories in the Western Hemisphere. The debate was particularly interesting to

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[517] Hendrickson, *The Spanish American War*, 18.

[518] Ibid., 153.

[519] Charles Henry Butler, *The Treaty Making Power of the United States*, (New York: Banks Law Publishing Co., 1902), 441.

expansionists such as Lodge who sought to gain the most territory possible from Spain at the conclusion of the war. For this reason, debates over the ownership of Spanish territories other than Cuba went on for nearly a year as Congress debated whether or not the United States should take possession of these islands.[520]

During Congressional deliberations, Lodge advocated an imperialistic approach toward the conquered islands. In his address on January 24, 1899, the senator insisted that Congress recognize the necessity of taking full custody of all the assets of the Spanish Empire.[521] He was unwilling to negotiate terms of Spanish surrender as the Americans had already proven their superiority on the battlefield, "In our war with Spain we conquered the Philippines, destroyed the power of Spain in those islands and took possession of their capital…When the treaty is ratified, we have full power and are absolutely free to do with those islands as we please."[522] Lodge declared that the United States had won the Philippines and the right to use the territory in whatever manner they saw fit. The native peoples had no participation in their own fate. Not only were the islands seen as property but so too were the native peoples of the islands. Lodge's statement surpasses paternalism, rather reflecting a tone compatible with slavery in which lesser races are treated as property. Bederman has argued that white male supremacy depended on the complete dependency of other races.[523] Slotkin also stated that several institutions in American history had depended on a hierarchy of power – not just slavery

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[520] Ibid., 442.

[521] Henry Cabot Lodge, "The Treaty of Peace," in *Patriotic Eloquence Relating to the Spanish-American War and its Issues*, ed. Robert I. Fulton and Thomas C. Trueblood, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1903), 194.

[522] Ibid.

[523] Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*, 134-136.

but also asylums, prisons, and Indian reservations.[524] Lodge's argument not only represented the racial and power dynamics used in the conquest of the frontier but the hierarchy of the United States as a whole. The Filipino people were not only racially inferior and to be treated as property but they also represented a suppressible population for the United States to dominate in order to retain control of the islands. Much like the Hawaiian population, if there were people to control and work then a territory was deemed valuable.

Lodge continued employing this kind of language as he described how he felt the nation should treat the islanders and how this reflected the power dynamics of conquest. Lodge claimed that the native population would be an uncivilized population if not for the structure imposed by the American military government.[525] He claimed that it was the responsibility of the United States to help civilize and form a government for the Philippines: "I believe that American civilization is entirely capable of it, and I should not have that profound faith which I now cherish in American civilization and American manhood if I didn't."[526] This sentence alone displays the complex nature of frontier policy through its inclusion of racial and gender elements in the power dynamics.

The senator regarded the Filipino people as uncivilized and unable to take care of themselves. This sentiment contrasted with his attitude to the United States, which not only displayed civility but a greater understanding of masculinity. Lodge's statement

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[524] Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment*, 236-237.

[525] Ibid., 194.

[526] Lodge, "The Treaty of Peace," in *Patriotic Eloquence Relating to the Spanish-American War and its Issues*, 195.

demonstrates Hoganson's notion that victory was a clear indication of masculine superiority.[527] The regeneration of masculinity had come to fruition through combat and gave the American people the right to exert dominance over the native population. For this reason, the native men were seen as less masculine than the Americans. Bederman has stated that the direct correlation between masculinity, race, and civilization occurred through the U.S. acquisition of territory in the late nineteenth century as part of the civilizing mission.[528] Lodge's statement rationalized that Anglo-American institutions made American culture superior to that of the native population. The Spanish Catholic monarchy's management of the islands was not good enough. Only under the management of the Protestant republican society of the United States could the Philippines become a civilized society.

Later that same year, Congress continued to debate the necessity of keeping the Philippines and funding so-called civilizing institutions. Lodge's speech, made on October 30, 1899, opposed those who disagreed with imperialism along with presenting a vision of the future of the United States as an imperial nation. Once again Lodge drew on the legacy of the frontier to defend his viewpoint. The first thing that Lodge did in his speech was defend the conquest of the islands and dismiss the opposition as unpatriotic much as Polk had done upon the annexation of Texas. He stated:

> Let us begin by dismissing all the idle jargon about imperialism, a perfectly meaningless word of sound and fury, signifying nothing. Let us consider in plain and simple fashion the practical question, what is our policy in regard to the Philippine Islands. We agree

[527] Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood*, 200-201

[528] Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*, 195.

> rightfully in those islands. No title could be more perfect than ours. The only government and sovereignty in the Philippines were those of Spain, and they have been transferred to us.[529]

From the beginning, Lodge dismissed the negative connotations of the word imperialism by saying that it holds no power in the discussion of American territorial acquisition. He removed the term from the discussion by proposing that, in fact, it was not a premeditated annexation as is attributed to the word imperialism. However, this is not the imperialism of the mid-1850s though the basis of conquest, economic advancement, and the myth of the frontiersman continued to be perpetuated.

Though the form of frontier conquest had changed, the principles remained the same. As Lodge addressed in his speech, the imperialism of the late nineteenth century was one of expansion of the capitalist market,

> The struggle of this age of ours is a conflict of economic forces. The great nations of the earth are competing in a desperate struggle for the world's trade, and in that competition, if we would have our farms profitable and our labor highly paid and fully employed we must not be left behind. In the economic struggle the great nations of Europe, for many years past have been seizing all the waste places, and all the weakly held lands of the earth, as the surest means of trade development.[530]

Lodge described the Spanish-American War as the result of the fight of imperialistic powers to acquire natural resources. Much like the expansion of the mid-1800s, the focus of the territorial acquisition was the benefit of the American people. While the primary goal of the U.S.-Mexican War was to gain more territory for the Southern socioeconomic

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[529] Henry Cabot Lodge, "Retain the Philippines," in *Patriotic Eloquence Relating to the Spanish-American War and its Issues*, ed. Robert I. Fulton and Thomas C. Trueblood, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1903), 198.

[530] Lodge, "Retain the Philippines," in *Patriotic Eloquence,* 199.

system of slavery, Lodge noted that the Spanish-American War was mostly for the collection of resources from other lands. He also stated that the goal of the territorial acquisition was for the benefit of farmers, which had also been a key component in the rhetoric of the previous war of expansion. Lodge concluded his speech by saying that the United States now had a foothold from which to expand trade into Asia.[531] This closing statement offered the impression that this was only a step toward U.S. economic imperialism overseas in the future.

On the same day, Lodge made another speech as a rebuttal to criticism about the American claim on the Philippines. As in his last speech, Lodge focused on the economic advantages of the Philippines and what this meant for the future of the United States. While the control over trade routes and raw materials differed slightly from the U.S.-Mexican War, Lodge reminded the audience that the history of American expansion still played a key role in the nation's economy. He did so by using similar imagery of the frontier in his speech.

The imagery he used connected the economics of imperialism with the civilization mission of the United States. Lodge stated that a French economist regarded the U.S. possession of the Philippines as a beneficial situation for the world's powers: "He sees that by throwing our weight into the scales we may be able to keep those vast regions and those teeming millions, not only open to our trade and commerce, but open to the light of Western civilization and thus save them from sinking down into the darkness

[531] Ibid.

of the Russian winter."[532] The motivation for the United States to retain the Philippines for the sake of trade in the Pacific region (considered the new frontier), therefore, went beyond economics and included the spread of culture.

Similar to the rhetoric of continental expansion, the language of imperialism included bringing the superior American culture into new areas. Lodge's imagery of the United States conquering and civilizing areas harked back to the frontier myth as well as its legacy in American foreign policy. Yet, Lodge did not simply stop at drawing connections with the past but also questioned the legacy and masculinity of the nation for future generations. As much as Lodge glorified the frontier, he stated that the men of Congress had the ability to make it part of America's future:

> I do not want this generation to fail in the task which has been imposed upon it; I do not want our children and our children's children, reaping the bitter harvest which has grown from our mistakes or cowardice, to look back to us and say, 'Oh, ye of little faith, what have you done?'[533] I want them to look back to us as we look back to the men who made the Constitution, not for thirteen little States, but with a far look to the future, for the government of a nation one day to be the master of a continent.[534]

Lodge used an attack on the masculinity of the members of Congress as a way to provoke a response from his audience. Much like Polk's debates with Congress regarding the amount of territory seized from Mexico, Lodge attributed the colonization of the

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[532] Henry Cabot Lodge, "Eastern Power," in *Patriotic Eloquence Relating to the Spanish-American War and its Issues*, ed. Robert I. Fulton and Thomas C. Trueblood, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1903), 201.

[533] This is a Biblical reference to Matthew 8:26 when Jesus calms the storm which threatens him and his disciples while they are at sea. The phrase serves as a double entendre as it not only refers to the questioning of faith and character of the men listening but also includes the reference to traveling across the sea to help those in need and bring them into the faith as Jesus and the disciples did. In this case, the Congressmen would be the faithless disciples who were frightened of their own destiny.

[534] Henry Cabot Lodge, "Eastern Power," 202.

Philippines as part of their destiny. He claimed that colonization proved national strength but performing the opposite proved to future generations that the nation was weak. As in other speeches by Lodge, the senator drew a connection between the history of the nation and its actions in the Spanish-American War. He claimed that the Founding Fathers established the Constitution so that the nation could continue to expand. Not only did Lodge apply this logic to the territorial expansion of the western frontier, his rhetoric raised the question of the nation's future. Lodge hoped to use the legacy of the frontier myth to convince Congress that the Philippines was not only the latest imperial conquest but the path to future conquests across the Pacific. Lodge drew on the history of conquest and the heroism of the nation's origins in order to present the capture of the Philippines as glorious. Slotkin argued that this shared history served as a psychological connection to a single goal, that of expansion.[535] However, Smith has stated that writers of the late nineteenth century believed in this idea of glorified expansion and that the United States would continue to progress in the future.[536] Lodge was not simply trying to make the seizure of the Pacific Islands the legacy of the nation but also stated that this was not imperialism as it was part of the growth of the nation. According to Lodge, the Spanish-American War was a glorious event that continued the frontier legacy. The senator was actively trying to create a mythical picture of the war by creating a heroic story similar to frontier novelists of decades past.

[535] Sloktin, *Regeneration Through Violence*, 36.

[536] Smith, *Virgin Land*, 258-259.

Ever the scholar, Lodge took the opportunity to write a book explaining the events of the Spanish-American War after the ratification of the peace treaty with Spain in 1899. In this monograph, Lodge presented his perspective on the war and included details of the heroic actions of the men who fought against the Spanish. The main purpose of the monograph was to remove any imperialist view of the war and reimagine it as a tale of heroism. The work began by detailing the history of imperialism on the North American continent.

> It was all in vain. Through woodland and savanna, over mountains and stream, came the steady tramp of the American pioneer. He was an adventurer, but he was also a settler, and he took what he held. He carried a rifle in one hand, he bore an axe in the other, and where he camped he made a clearing and built a home. [537]

This phrase captures the general tone of the book and placed Lodge's account of the war among the novels of frontier myth. The character that Lodge described was much the same hero as in the novels analyzed by Slotkin, Smith, or Greenberg; he was a fighter, a settler, and a living legend from whom the character of the American man developed. Not only was the frontiersman a conqueror but he settled the area he conquered with masculine virility. Lodge's introduction to the American man invokes the Daniel Boone character and righteous man intent on conquering new territory for his country. After invoking this legendary status as so many novels had done before him, Lodge moved toward the Spanish-American War and its legendary status in the mythology of frontier expansion.

[537] Lodge, *The War with Spain*, 3.

Upon arriving in the year 1880 in his chronology, Lodge merges the lines of his narrative to explain the U.S. decision to intervene in the fight for Cuban independence from Spain. Despite talk of the necessity of the independence of Cuba, Lodge does not shy away from talking about the economic benefits.[538] This not only set the tone for the majority of his monograph but his rhetoric as a whole. Lodge carefully used his rhetoric to captivate the audience with his discussion of the great American spirit and the beneficial emotions that entails before revealing the underlying motivations within the situation. Lodge did not stop with his account of the Spanish-American War but persisted in perpetuating the frontier myth in his later works.

Thereafter, Lodge continued to publish works about American history as well as major political events that he had witnessed. His role as a U.S. senator, which he continued until 1924, allowed Lodge to promote U.S. expansion. Throughout his time as a senator, Lodge continued to head the Committee of Foreign Relations where he continued to urge for expansion as well as a strong U.S. presence on the world stage.[539] Lodge was a perpetuator of myth writing stories detailing the heroic actions of frontier expansion and glory in the growth of the United States as a nation. In all aspects of his life, Lodge was an expansionist and one that would always seek to glorify such actions.

Though Lodge was not as robust a character as Roosevelt, the senator demonstrated that the idea of the American frontiersman went beyond the actual experience of the frontier; it existed as a cultural symbol that captured the imagination of

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[538] Ibid., 11-12.

[539] Evan Thomas, *The War Lovers: Roosevelt, Lodge, Hearst and the Rush to Empire*, (New York: Back Bay Books, 2010), 23.

various people across time. It embodied the historical attitudes, gendered ideas, and racial archetypes that developed the nation from its original thirteen colonies. The frontiersman was not only a way to express the imperial American spirit but also served as a tool to gather support for a common national identity as the United States began to take a new shape and become one of the largest world powers during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Yet the legacy of that masculine imperialism continued to be a part of national memory. In that regard, the glorification of expansion in the American psyche allowed the spirit of the frontiersman to live on within American culture.

Conclusion

Expansionist language during the nineteenth century was the result of leaders growing up in a cultural system focused on the frontier. American cultural values such as masculinity, race, power, Christianity, and violence existed in an interconnected web that glorified territorial conquest. The frontiersman served as a symbol of expansion and the cultural values embedded within that system. The myth of the frontier was a cultural ideology that spanned time. It was not a stagnant concept but rather a fluid symbol that transformed with the nation based on the social, economic, and political changes that transpired throughout the 1800s. Each of the leaders discussed in this thesis grew up with the image of the frontiersman as the quintessential American hero. They each developed an ideology centered on expansion and the elevation of the nation. Despite their different paths, James K. Polk, Jefferson Davis, and Henry Cabot Lodge all developed an affinity for the frontiersman that subsequently developed into political rhetoric. These politicians did not simply perpetuate a culture of expansionism, however, but also the cultural values that were entrenched within the frontier.

The aforementioned leaders used the language and culture of the frontier as conscious tools to argue for imperialistic agendas. Political rhetoric created an image of the frontiersman that was beneficial to a particular social, political, and economic situation. By the accounts of James K. Polk and Jefferson Davis, the frontiersman was a unifying symbol to reconcile a partisan nation. The figure embodied the values of Indian fighters and Southern planters who sought to expand slavery. Simultaneously, the frontiersman embodied the freedom of the white male to build a better life for himself in

the open land of the Pacific Northwest. In Henry Cabot Lodge's case, these justifications were used to develop an economic empire during the Spanish-American War and to also revitalize a lost masculinity. The use of the frontiersman in their speeches demonstrated that the frontiersman represented a culture larger than any one leader.

The American culture that portrayed the frontier narrative and political rhetoric as part of the nation's history had a deep connection to aggressive expansionism. Political rhetoric that included references to the frontiersman drew on a violent masculinity that conquered the unknown wilderness. Whether this new area was already held by another western power or by a native people, it was still considered unsettled because the area was not in the possession of the United States. In the frontier mythology and in political rhetoric, America was a civilizing force that would bring light into the darkness of areas unsettled by white Protestant men. Native Americans, Mexicans, and Filipinos were all savages by this definition. They did not have the ability to properly utilize the land nor govern correctly. In order to bring the wilderness under control, therefore, violence was necessary, but more importantly violence was celebrated as a method of gaining more wealth for the United States during the nineteenth century wars of expansion. Yet both of these wars demonstrated the same structural principle: U.S. expansion was based on a hierarchy that placed white Protestant males at its head. All others were subordinate figures that kept the elite in power.

By analyzing the use of the frontier myth, the use of symbols of American culture can be analyzed within the realm of politics. Instead of the frontier myth being a reemerging trend, it becomes a cultural focal point demonstrating which cultural ideas

have continued to be part of the nation's history. Understanding this legend as a cultural icon places the development of political and racial conflicts with various groups into a historical perceptive. The development of the United States revolving around the idea of finding the next frontier along with its conquest places these conflicts in perspective.

The significance of the frontiersman and the cultural values that accompany the myth also opens a discussion concerning the transferring of these values to other peoples conquered by the United States. Conquered peoples under the United States changed over time under the dominant culture. By analyzing the frontier myth as an extension of American values, further studies can be conducted to analyze the relationship between this myth and those of masculine identities in other cultures. The frontier myth was more than a tool – it was a manifestation of the values of the United States and an identity for the nation. It was more than a symbol; it was a marker upon the history of the nation that defined how the United States approached its place in the world. Whether it was for partisan conquest or to help relive a fictionalized glory, the idea of the frontier myth remained a part of the rhetoric of foreign policy in the United States. It continues to be part of the culture of the United States and by understanding its nature and the values it instills, the myth goes from an obscure mythology to the reality of the national culture. The role of the frontier myth in the history of the United States forces the nation to come face to face with the imperialistic values kept alive through the mythology of its nation.

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